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TWO SIDES TO HOCKEY FIGHT DEBATE, PG 10

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Entertainment

Canadian fashion tips for Michelle

pg 27

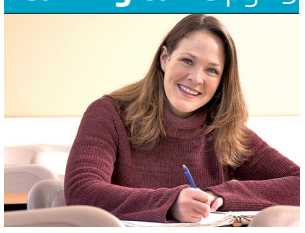
Little League among tax targets

CHARITY Little League Canada, a group that provides baseball programs for 40,000 youth, has been barred from accepting charitable donations. The move came yesterday as part of what has become all-out war on groups that raise money using what the Canada Revenue Agency calls "abusive" tax shelters. Little League Canada stands accused of issuing more than $82 million of bogus tax receipts. Also falling under the federal sword yesterday was the Millennium Charitable Foundation, a charity that purports to raise money for learning materials for the poor. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada pg 6

Canada stays firm on Israel at UN vote

Learning Curve pg 15



Never too old for class

Sports pg 14

York Report on poker whiz

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Easter Seals **Leaf falls at sledge hockey**

RICK EGLINTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman Mike Van Ryn brings a little smile to the face of Ian Steadman, 10, as they take a tumble during a game of sledge hockey yesterday to promote the 31st annual fundraiser for Easter Seals. The event, known as the Toronto Maple Leafs Skate for Easter Seal Kids, will be held Feb. 16.

Israel inches closer to Gaza City amid threats

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stood within Hamas rocket range yesterday and warned Islamic militants that they face an "iron fist" unless they agree to Israeli terms for an end to war in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas showed no signs of wavering, however, with its leader, Ismail Haniyeh, saying the militants were "closer to victory."

Despite the tough words, Egypt said it was making slow progress in brokering a truce, and special Mideast envoy Tony Blair said elements were in place for a ceasefire.

As Olmert spoke in the Israeli city of Ashkelon, Israeli tanks, gunboats and warplanes hammered suspected hiding places of Hamas operatives who control the poor, densely populated territory just across the border.

After nightfall, flares and explosions lit up the sky over Gaza and heavy gunfire was heard in parts of the coastal territory of 1.4 million people.

Hamas fighters battled Israeli troops on the outskirts of Gaza City and launched 15 rockets at southern Israel. The group's prime minister insisted on an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the opening of blockaded border crossings as part of any truce.

"The gates of hell have opened. God help us."
Gaza resident Khader Mussa

Fighting picked up early today, as Israeli forces, backed by artillery and naval shelling, advanced closer to Gaza City from the south, witnesses said.

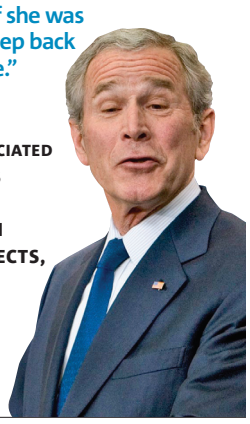
Khader Mussa, 35, a resident of the area under attack, told The Associated Press by telephone that he saw two apartment buildings on fire. He said he was huddling in the basement of his building with 25 other people, including his pregnant wife and his parents. "The gates of hell have opened," he said. "God help us."

At least 20 Palestinians died yesterday, some of them from wounds suffered on previous days, Gaza health officials said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubya shows 'em the funny

At his final news conference as U.S. president yesterday, George W. Bush showed he hasn't lost his sense of humour. Some examples:

- When thanking the reporters for their work, he poked fun at himself, recalling one of his most famous word mixups: "Sometimes you misunderestimated me."
- He teased CNN White House correspondent Suzanne Malveaux about his repeated mispronunciation of her name — it's correctly pronounced Soo-ZAHN — saying: "I finally got your name right after, how many years?" The final answer: Eight years.
- A reporter preceded a question with, "And I'm not trying to play gotcha." Bush's first response: "Gotcha."
- Bush joked about his post-presidency plans, saying: "I just can't envision myself, you know, the big straw hat and a Hawaiian shirt sitting on some beach. ... Particularly since I quit drinking."
- While calling on one reporter, Bush teased her, asking if she was "asleep back there."



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BUSH REFLECTS, PG 8

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Man arrested with rifle and cocaine
A Toronto man arrested with a .22-calibre rifle was also carrying cocaine and marijuana, police say. The 20-year-old was arrested early Sunday near Birchmount Road and Sheppard Avenue. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Arrest made in Jan. 3 slaying

A 20-year-old Toronto man appeared in court yesterday, charged with first-degree murder in the Jan. 3 shooting death of Johnny Gewarges Youkhana. Anderson Nop, 20, of Toronto is charged with first-degree murder. He was arrested at his home Sunday. Youkhana, 36, was found shot to death at a strip plaza on Milvan Drive, just north of Finch Avenue West, after an altercation in a massage parlour. Police, who are searching for two other men, say tips led them to Nop. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Movies

The movie Chandni Chowk to China aims to bring Bollywood to a mainstream North American audience.

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video A Montreal plan to boost business for horse-drawn carriages could be killing the industry at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Allan Small on why 2009 is the year to make the most of your RRSP contribution at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 9 4 2; **Ontario Pick 4:** 1 8 3 2
Encore: 7312208; **Daily Keno:** 7, 8, 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 38, 39, 47, 48, 57, 59, 61, 64 and 69 These results are not official.

News in brief

CRIME A six-week investigation dubbed Project Caribou has led to 38 arrests and more than 130 charges, closing about 32 cases of home invasions and robberies in Durham Region. Among the charges were 42 counts of robbery, nine for committing a crime while wearing a disguise, nine for break and enter, eight for breach of recognizance and five for possession of a weapon. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

16 charged in deadly crash

The directors, two bartenders and a manager of an upscale Muskoka-area golf resort where three young men spent their final hours before a fatal car crash last summer are facing 34 liquor licence-related charges.

"This is the first time, I believe, that we have had something of this magnitude," said Const. Maureen Tilson of Bracebridge OPP. "It was a horrific incident. I think the charges reflect that."

Charges have been laid under the Liquor Licence Act by the Ontario Provincial Police against employees of the Lake Joseph Club and 13 senior executives of ClubLink, including the president and CEO, Kuldip Sahi. ClubLink Corporation, which owns Lake Joseph Club, has also been charged.

All face charges of permitting drunken behaviour on the premises and serving liquor to people who were obviously intoxicated.

Charged are Patrick Brigham, Ian Colterjohn, James Flegg, Walter Moon, Charles Lorimer, Murray Blair, Paul David Campbell, Egidio Caravaggio, Scott Davidson, Jim Molenhuis, Neil Osborne, Kuldip Sahi, Bruce Simmonds, Donald Turple, Robert Visentin and Jack Winberg.

They are scheduled to appear in a Bracebridge court on Jan. 27.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Facing hefty fines and jail time

- The employees could face a fine of up to $100,000 or a year in jail, or both.
- The company could face a fine of up to $250,000, police said.

T.O. buying into Obama merchandise

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CONSUMERS Thanks to the power of mass marketing, even Toronto fans can buy into the spirit of Barack Obama's inauguration.

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T-shirt emblazoned with the swearing-in date, dress the baby in a "Barack-a-bye baby" onesie, wrap themselves in an Obama blanket or cook dinner in oven mitts that honour the occasion.

Judging from the vast quantities of loot now bearing the U.S. president-elect's face and campaign slogan, his pop culture clout rivals that of Princess Di, Bratz dolls and MTV rolled into one.

"It's unprecedented," says Megan Boler, associate chair of theory and policy studies at the U of T's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

So, is this politics as a fashion statement? Ideology reduced to cheesy trinkets? Boler says it's not that simple.

At a time of bleak economic headlines and crisis in the Middle East, "there's a desperation for hope," she says.

"The cultural mood is that when you wear Obama, you're not just wearing the face of the next president, you're also projecting this need for hope."

Obama's inauguration ceremony takes place Jan. 20.

TORSTAR

Developers skew system, explains prof

POLITICS York University Prof. Robert MacDermid is not suggesting that 905-region politicians are accepting brown-bag bribes.

But his study into campaign donations to councillors in cities that have long embraced urban sprawl opens a window into the world of developer influence: A $750 maximum gift may not change a politician's mind, he suggests, but huge industry donations can subtly encourage pro-development ways.

"Campaign contributions are a kind of keyhole through which one can look at these larger relationships," MacDermid said.

"The whole system then becomes obvious as one that is pushing us toward the same kind of development, over and over again."

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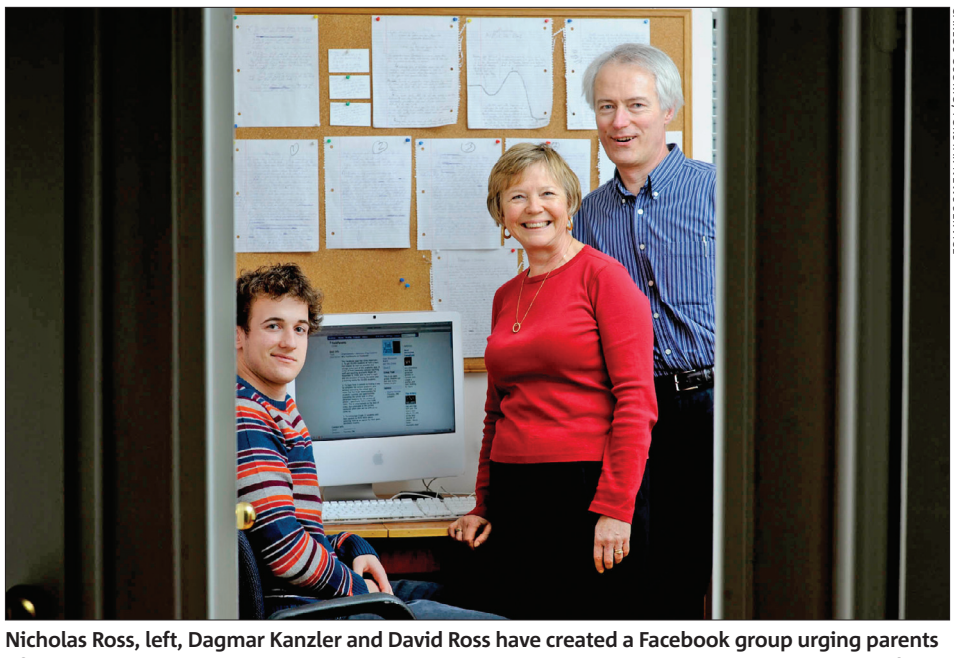
Study

- MacDermid found a significant chunk of disclosed campaign donations come from subdivision developers.



CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Nicholas Ross, left, Dagmar Kanzler and David Ross have created a Facebook group urging parents of prospective students to reconsider having their children enrol at York University as a part of a campaign to force York and the union to end the 10-week strike.

Don't enrol, warn York parents

EDUCATION Parents should think twice about sending their teens to York University because of ongoing labour troubles, says a family that has launched a Facebook group and blog pressing for an end to a strike that is now in its 10th week.

With tomorrow's university application deadline looming, Dagmar Kanzler and David Ross — parents of a second-year student — say they need to "warn other parents that York is not able to deliver the education" it promised because classes have been cancelled for almost all of the school's 50,000 students since the strike began Nov. 6.

> **"It's not about them. It's about 50,000 people ... in limbo right now."**
> Dagmar Kanzler

"Both the university and the union have completely lost track of the fact that this is all about the students," said Kanzler. "It's not about them. It's about 50,000 people who are just in limbo right now."

No date has yet been set for the vote on the latest offer from York.

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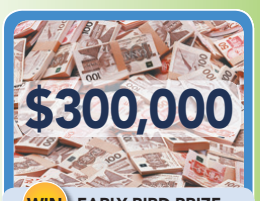

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Woman killed by her own car
An elderly Oshawa woman died in hospital after she was run over and trapped by her own car. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORSAR NEWS SERVICE

Patty Rout, vice-president and treasurer of OPSEU, left, and Michael Hurley, president of Ontario Council of Hospital Unions/CUPE, warn about coming job losses yesterday at a hospital union press conference at Queen's Park.

Job losses in health care on horizon, warn unions

Nearly 5,000 health-care jobs could be lost along with nine million hours of patient care if provincial hospital funding is not increased to keep pace with inflation rates, population growth and an aging society, Ontario's unions warned yesterday.

And as Ontario stumbles through an economic slowdown, the province should consider investing heavily in the health sector to create jobs and get rid of wait times, said Ken Lewenza, national president of the Canadian Auto Workers union.

"A progressive government would not only significantly increase funding to health care, but go over and beyond to eliminate wait times in multiple services in Ontario as an opportunity to create jobs and opportunities," Lewenza said at a Queen's Park press conference yesterday.

"You are going to see an ongoing and aggressive downsizing of the system that we haven't experienced for some time."
Mike Hurley, president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions

In 2008, the hospitals received a funding increase of 2.4 per cent from the provincial government and the health-care inflation rate was 3.5 per cent, said Mike Hurley, president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, part of CUPE.

"We are predicting in the coming fiscal year ... you will see 5,000 positions eliminated in the hospitals — 4,000 through attrition and 1,000 through involuntary layoffs," said Hurley. "You are going to see an ongoing and aggressive downsizing of the system that we haven't experienced for some time."

However, the Ontario Hospital Association, the organization representing the provincial hospitals, would not confirm 5,000 jobs are currently threatened.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Agency eyeing lot just off Gardiner

PROPERTY Toronto is considering redeveloping a small triangular parking lot, squeezed between the Gardiner Expressway and a major off-ramp, into something more lucrative — perhaps a 50-storey condo tower.

The review of the city-owned, quarter-hectare lot at York and Harbour streets is just the sort of thing the new Build Toronto agency was created to do after a blue-ribbon advisory panel said the city could reap $150 million per year through better stewardship of its real estate.

Build Toronto will oversee Toronto's real estate holdings, valued at $18 billion, with an eye to development of underused assets. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mom pleads not guilty to giving child cocaine

CRIME The father of a boy who almost died after ingesting cocaine, allegedly over a 14-month period when he was two years old, says he never gave his son drugs.

"Did you ever expose him and have him ingest or otherwise give him cocaine?" Crown prosecutor Josh Levy asked the 26-year-old man on the first day of his ex-girlfriend's trial.

"No," replied the father, a former crack cocaine dealer, now a York University criminology student. He cannot be identified to protect the identity of their son.

Recovery

- Although the boy, now five, has made a remarkable recovery, he is brain damaged and suffers from seizures.

The mother, 26, pleaded not guilty yesterday to five charges, including aggravated assault, administering a noxious substance and failing to provide the necessities of life.

Levy told Justice Tamarin Dunnet doctors treating the boy for a cocaine overdose in August 2005 found several broken ribs in various stages of healing. Tests on one of his hairs showed he had been exposed to cocaine for 14 months, he said.

The trial continues today. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Memorial for Canadian civilians killed in Afghanistan

A memorial to Canadian civilians killed in Afghanistan was unveiled yesterday at a ceremony at the Canadian Embassy in Kabul. The memorial near the embassy's main entrance honours, among others, two Canadian air workers who were killed last summer in a Taliban ambush. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

No spending cuts: Flaherty

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, said Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, left, as he met with business, labour and community leaders in advance of the Jan. 27 federal budget. Flaherty said yesterday the Conservative government is not looking to cut spending as it prepares to table its budget, but it is looking for creative ways to help Canadians through the global recession.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada nixes Israel motion

Canada stood alone before a United Nations human rights council yesterday, the only nation to oppose a motion condemning the Israeli military offensive in Gaza.

The vote before the Geneva-based body shows the Stephen Harper government has abandoned a more even-handed approach to the Middle East in favour of unalloyed support of Israel, according to some longtime observers.

Marius Grinius, Canada's representative on the council, said the language of the motion, which accused Israel of sparking a humanitarian crisis, was "unnecessary, unhelpful and inflammatory."

And Grinius said the text failed to "clearly recognize" that Hamas rocket attacks on Israel triggered the crisis.

But observers say Ottawa's unwavering support of Israel in the current conflict — highlighted by yesterday's vote — is a break from more neutral positions of the past.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Only opposition

- Canada was the only nation on the 47-member UN council to oppose the strongly worded motion, which called for an investigation into "grave" human rights violations by Israeli forces, although 13 nations, mostly European, abstained from the vote.

Montreal **93-year-old convicted of sex assault**

GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Philippe Hamelin, 93, who was convicted of sexually assaulting and beating his two daughters 50 years ago, leaves the Montreal courthouse yesterday after a sentencing hearing. The Crown is seeking a prison sentence of between seven and nine years while Hamelin's lawyer argued that any time in jail would be tantamount to a death sentence.

Pregnant woman avoids deportation

IMMIGRATION A pregnant woman who was to be deported to China yesterday was granted a rare last-minute extension to stay in Canada.

Just two days before Juan Yun Chen, 28, and her 10-month-old son were scheduled to leave, she received a rare minister's permit, a direct intervention from the federal immigration minister, allowing her to remain here for another year.

"We are so happy," said Chen. "Thank you to everyone who helped us."

Though Chen will be able to stay, her immigration application is still expected to take months to process, said Olivia Chow, the NDP immigration critic who has been following the case.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Arson suspected in Edmonton blaze
Police have confirmed that the fire that destroyed the luxury home of a former oilsands executive in Edmonton was arson. The $850,000 home — which belonged to former Syncrude senior executive Jim Carter — was firebombed Saturday evening when no one was home. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Final scramble for universities

Ontario's high school students face fierce competition from a growing pool of applicants boasting ballooning grades as they scramble to meet tomorrow's crucial deadline for applying to the province's universities.

Last year, some 84,000 high school students applied for 64,000 spots at Ontario's 20 universities. That was a four per cent rise in applications from 2007, and officials expect a similar increase this year.

In the guidance office at Earl Haig Secondary School in Toronto, the stress is palpable.

Graduating students have been streaming in for appointments with the school's six counsellors for weeks.

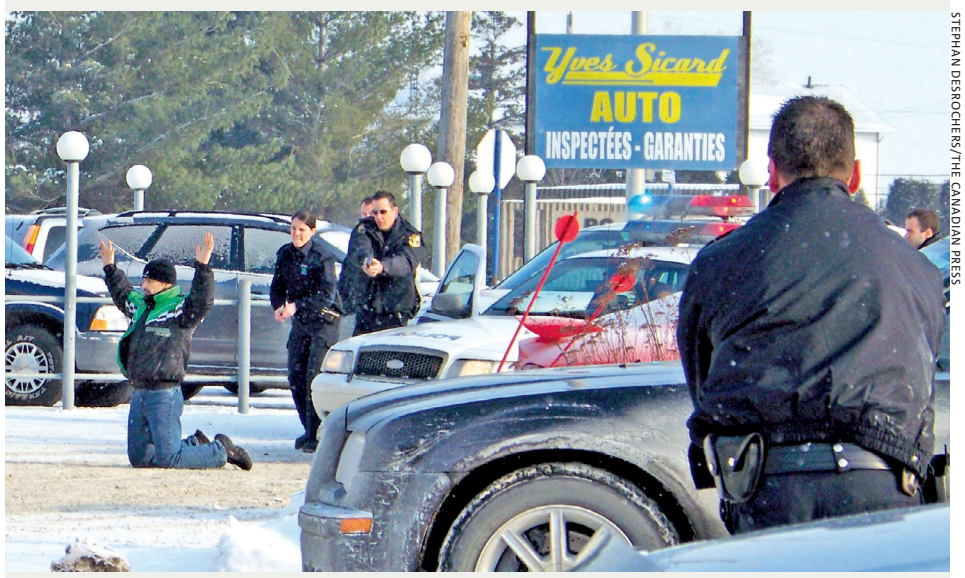
"They've kind of sat on (applications) over Christmas and now there's this panic rush."
Gael Robertson-Craig

Some beg for a boost to their marks. Others ask for help to retrieve the pin codes they need to apply to university online.

"They've kind of sat on it over Christmas and now there's this panic rush," said Gael Robertson-Craig, who heads the department at Earl Haig. "There'll be panic where they'll put down all (their choices), and then there'll be this lull, and then there'll be all this panic when marks go in."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec **Cops take down fugitive**



STEPHAN DESROCHERS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fugitive Daniel Grenier is arrested by police yesterday in Trois-Rivieres, Que. Grenier, 41, a Sherbrooke native, has been wanted since Nov. 16 for breaching parole conditions by failing to return to a halfway house. He has a lengthy criminal record, including convictions for drug trafficking, robbery, uttering threats and owning prohibited weapons.

Career program flawed, critics claim

Only 3,300 laid-off workers have enrolled in the provincial government's Second Careers job-retraining program, even though there is enough room for 20,000 people.

Second Career is designed to help laid-off workers by helping them find jobs in their own communities.

An employment counsellor helps identify what jobs are in demand in the community and where the prospects are. The program can pay up to $28,000 — or more in some cases — in grants to help cover tuition for retraining and items such books, living expenses, travel and care for dependants, so the worker can "get a good job," according to the government website.

But critics say eligibility criteria are too narrow and red tape prevents easy access to the program.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Economy hitting border truck traffic

CROSSING The slumping North American economy has resulted in a sharp decrease in Canada-U.S. cross-border truck traffic. The Public Border Operators Association says the Ambassador Bridge at Windsor, Ont., had 2.8 million crossings in 2008. That's a decline of 15 per cent from 2007. The bridge is Canada's busiest crossing into the U.S. At the second-busiest link, the Blue Water Bridge in Sarnia, Ont., traffic was also down. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dallaire urges Khadr's release

WASHINGTON Romeo Dallaire is urging U.S. president-elect Barack Obama to release Omar Khadr to Canada and recognize that his imprisonment in Guantanamo Bay has been a human rights violation. The retired general, who is in Washington addressing what was referred to at a news conference as the scourge of child soldiers, has long maintained that Khadr should be considered a child soldier.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

SMOKING The Manitoba government is facing another legal challenge over its attempts to ban smoking in public places. The Brokenhead Ojibwa Nation filed a statement of claim in Court of Queen's Bench yesterday that argues the province has no authority to require reserves to go smoke-free. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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First World War veteran dies in Britain at 108

One of Britain's last surviving First World War veterans has died from a chest infection, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday. William Stone was 108. He is the last known veteran in Britain to have fought in both world wars. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

GM prepares for the worst

General Motors Corp.'s chief operating officer Fritz Henderson said yesterday that the automaker has presented a worst-case scenario to Congress in which it would need more money than the $13.4 billion US allocated by the U.S. Treasury Department. But Henderson would not speculate on whether GM will need all of the $18 billion in government loans it sought in December. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bush reflects on his record

By turns wistful, aggressive and joking at the final news conference of his presidency, U.S. President George W. Bush vigorously defended his record yesterday but also offered an extraordinary listing of his mistakes — including his optimistic Iraq speech before a giant Mission Accomplished banner in 2003.

J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President George W. Bush mulls over a question yesterday as he holds his last formal news conference at the White House in Washington.

During what he called "the ultimate exit interview," Bush showed anger at times when presented with some of the criticisms of his time in office. He particularly became indignant when asked about America's bruised image.

"I disagree with this assessment that, you know, that people view America in a dim light," he said. "It may be damaged amongst some of the elite. But people still understand America stands for freedom."

With the Iraq war in its sixth year, Bush most aggressively defended his decisions on that issue, which will define his presidency like no other.

But it was in that area that he also acknowledged mistakes. He said that "not finding weapons of mass destruction was a significant disappointment." The accusation that Saddam Hussein had and was pursuing weapons of mass destruction was Bush's main justification for going to war.

He also admitted to another miscalculation: Eager to report progress after U.S. troops ousted Saddam, he declared less than two months after the war started that "the United States and our allies have prevailed," a claim made under a Mission Accomplished banner that turned out to be wildly optimistic.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

SRI LANKA Warplanes pounded rebel positions, including a hideout used by rebel leaders, as Sri Lankan troops pushed ahead yesterday with an offensive to crush the Tamil Tigers and seize the insurgents' last northern stronghold.

INDONESIA More than 230 passengers and crew were missing and presumed dead yesterday following a day of searching for survivors of an Indonesian ferry that capsized Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madoff to remain free

NEW YORK A U.S. judge has allowed Bernard Madoff to remain free on bail, rejecting a bid by prosecutors to send the disgraced money manager to jail.

Madoff mailed more than $1 million US in jewelry and heirlooms to family and friends over the holidays.

Prosecutors said the gifts were grounds to have his bail revoked because what's left of his assets will have to be returned to burned investors.

Madoff's lawyers said the gifts were an innocent mistake and said he is neither a danger to the community nor a threat to flee.

The fact that Madoff has been able to spend his days in his luxury apartment instead of jail has stirred outrage among those who lost billions in his alleged fraud that he reportedly describes as a $50-billion Ponzi scheme.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crime fell in first half of 2008 in the U.S.: FBI

REPORT The FBI says crime in the United States declined in the first half of 2008 despite an alarming spike in small-town murders.

Violent crime countrywide fell 3.5 per cent, and property crime dropped 2.5 per cent, according to the bureau's preliminary figures released yesterday.

Murders dropped 4.4 per cent countrywide, though the drop wasn't universal. In mid-sized cities — those with 50,000 to 100,000 people — murder and manslaughter increased 3.3 per cent.

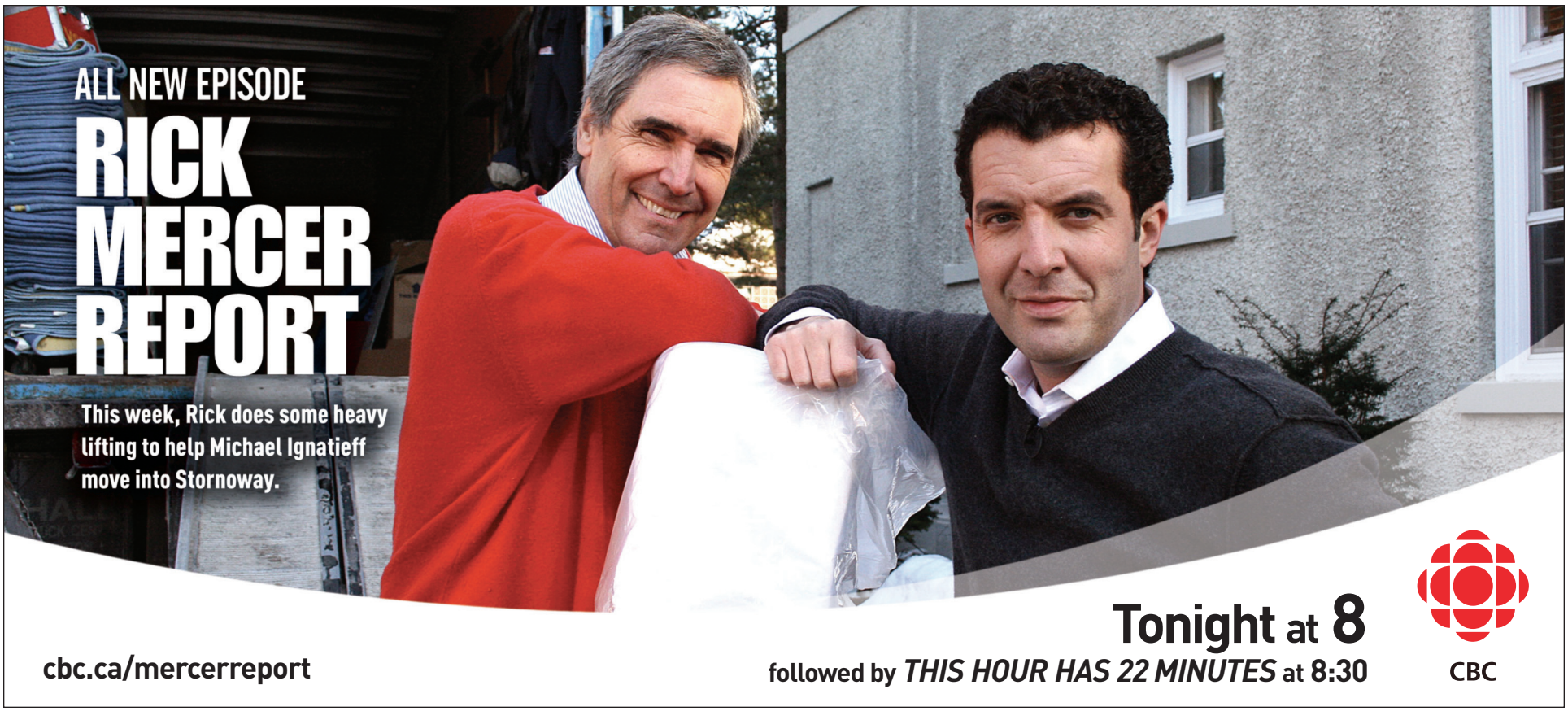
Murders in small towns — those with fewer than 10,000 people — rose nearly 10 per cent, the FBI reported.

In the Midwest, police departments reported a six per cent drop in violent crimes. In the West, the decrease was five per cent, while the Northeast saw a 2.9 per cent drop and the South a 1.5 per cent decline.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Car thefts down

- The slumping economy made it a bad year for car dealers, but 2008 was a bad year for car thieves as well: Motor vehicle thefts plunged 12.6 per cent.



Cuba ends ban on new private taxis
Cuban officials say they are ending a nearly 10-year ban on new licences for private taxis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Broadening the bailout

Seeking to reassure wary legislators, U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's top economic adviser told congressional leaders yesterday that Obama intends to broaden the goals of the remaining $350-billion US financial bailout and impose tougher restrictions and oversight on how the money is spent.

Larry Summers, Obama's choice for National Economic Council director, told House and Senate leaders in a letter from the transition team that the need to tap the second half of the $700-billion fund is "imminent and urgent."

The letter spells out how Obama intends to use the Troubled Asset Relief Program to help community banks, small businesses, consumers and homeowners as well as large financial institutions.

"The president-elect also shares the frustration of the American people that we have seen too little effect from this rescue plan."
Larry Summers

Obama yesterday asked George W. Bush to seek the remaining bailout money so Obama can have it at his disposal promptly after taking office Jan. 20.

Summers' letter included tacit acknowledgment of bipartisan congressional dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Bush administration has administered the first half of the funds.

"The president-elect also shares the frustration of the American people that we have seen too little effect from this rescue plan on jobs, incomes, and the ability of responsible homeowners to stay in their homes," Summers wrote.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thai court charges two in fatal club fire

BANGKOK A Thai court has issued arrest warrants for the owner and manager of a trendy Bangkok nightclub where 66 revellers perished in a New Year's Eve fire and stampede.

A Canadian was among those killed.

Police say Wisuth Setsawat, owner of Santika Club, and club manager Suriya Ritrabue have been charged with negligence resulting in the deaths and injuries of others.

The two have also been charged with allowing in underage customers after a 17-year-old was found among the dead.

Police have said the fire was likely sparked by a fireworks display on the nightclub's stage.

The maximum penalty for negligence is 10 years in prison and a fine of not more than the equivalent of $573 US, while allowing in underage customers carries a fine of $1,433.

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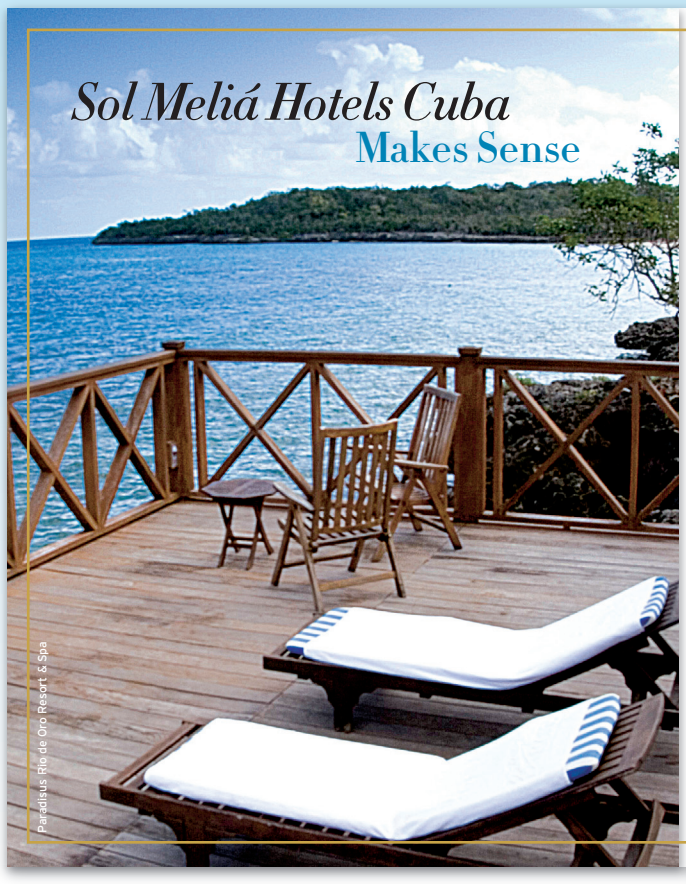

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Comment & Views

Comment

A moment Canada can savour

National**Report**

"Drumroll please," came the American TV man's deeply sarcastic voice, announcing the location of Barack Obama's first foreign trip. "It's Canada."

What a letdown! What a bore!

Many expected the new U.S. president to open with something exotic. Maybe South Africa to see Mandela! What a jump-start message that would send the world.

But slumbering Canada? How does that constitute change? Most every U.S. president, George W. Bush being an exception, has come here first.

Never mind though. We'll take the honour. In the case of the most celebrated incoming president in decades, what an honour it is.

The media focus will be off the charts. The Obama visit could well set the new tone for this administration — accommodation in dealing with foreign countries as opposed to the confrontation that marked the Bush years.

"This is the beginning of an initiative by the president," said Gordon Giffin, a former ambassador to Canada, "to be followed around the world by the new secretary of state, that we're back in the mode of listening to our friends and co-ordinating with our friends, as opposed to sitting in Washington and instructing our friends."

Obama will likely address Parliament and, in so doing, set the stage for a much improved relationship with Canada. He can hardly do worse than Bush, whose Department of Homeland Stupidity has continued to put up barriers along the border between two of history's greatest friends — even though we're now more than seven years past 9/11.

If the Obama administration is aiming for a new era of trust, this continent is a good place to start.

Stephen Harper will be looking, as any politician would be, for an opportunity to share in the Obama glow. Being a conservative, having been in sync with a good portion of the Bush philosophy, it wouldn't normally be an easy thing to do.

But the dismal economic conditions are already forcing a liberal turn on the prime minister. The deficit spending and the stimulus spending to bolster the economy reflect what Obama will be doing south of the border.

Moreover, the president and the prime minister can make headway on what they have both talked about — a cap-and-trade system to combat global warming.

Given the energy security needs of Washington, Harper will have some clout at the table. If the president wants to wade into protectionist waters, the PM need only mention our oil and gas riches.

All in all, the visit sets up ideally for Harper. Like Bush, he has brought an arrogant and confrontational attitude to governance.

Now, by basking in Obama's new way, he has a chance to pretend it never happened.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

Views

Dropping the gloves on fighting in hockey

Ken Campbell
CON

I just got off the phone with Mike Sanderson. He told me beautiful stories about a 21-year-old honours student who would do anything for a friend or a teammate. Then he told me how he and his ex-wife looked at each other New Year's Day and decided to take their son off life support and how they stood by his bed while he took his last breaths a couple hours later.

Don Sanderson is dead because of a meaningless hockey fight in a meaningless game that was already decided because hockey has this ridiculous code that requires teams that are losing to "send a message."

Let's take a different message instead. Let's use this incident to ban fighting at all levels of hockey, including the NHL. Let's never allow anyone to go through what Mike and Dahna Sanderson are enduring again.

I have long believed it would only be a matter of time before a player died in a fight, and someday it won't be in a senior league game in Brantford; it will be at centre ice at Madison Square Garden or the Air Canada Centre.

And it is all so meaningless. If fighting is such an important part of the game, why does play stop when a fight breaks out?

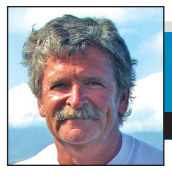
There may have been a purpose to fighting at one time, but the reality is that fighting has become nothing more than a creepy sideshow for blood lusting voyeurs. It's apparently supposed to protect skilled players, but what is accomplished when two goons go at it after a star is hit?

And if it's supposed to keep players honest and prevent them from clubbing each other with their sticks, isn't that the biggest indictment of all on hockey? The game is incapable of policing itself, so the players have to do it?

The culture of violence that surrounds this game is astounding. Without fighting, hockey would be every bit as intense, hits would be every bit as hard and the competition would be every bit as fierce.

Hockey can keep its fighting spirit without keeping fighting as a blight on the game.

Ken Campbell is a writer for The Hockey News.



Jim Van Horne
PRO

I don't consider myself to be a violent person. In fact, I'm a lover, not a fighter. I hate violence of any kind. Except when it comes to hockey. Give me a hockey fight between two willing and able combatants and my blood gets goin'.

I have been watching hockey my entire life. I had the privilege of covering the sport at the local and national levels for more than 35 years. I've been to Stanley Cup finals, world championships, world junior championships and the Olympics.

I love the sport, and I believe that fighting is part of the game. It's been an element that teams have used for intimidation, protection, and even winning. Today's hockey fights are different than they were before the original expansion in 1967-68. Back then, fighters were also players, fulfilling a dual role. Not only could they scare you with their fists, but with their skill as well — John Ferguson was a prime example.

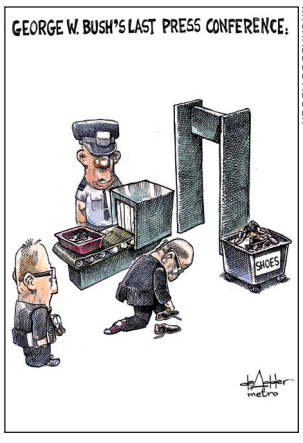
The first game I went to at Maple Leaf Gardens featured a major brawl between the Maple Leafs and the Blackhawks. I think Pierre Pilote was one of the fighters. It was in the penalty box, and Frank Mahovolich climbed the glass to separate the combatants. I'd never seen anything like it, and until that time it was one of the most exciting things I had ever seen in my life.

It's a part of the game fans absolutely love. There is nothing that brings them out of the seats faster than a good knuckle-chuck.

Yes, it was a fight that resulted in the recent death of the Whitby Dunlops' Don Sanderson — a terrible, senseless loss — but it was an accident. Players do not go on the ice with the intention of killing each other. I can't remember another incident where a player died as a direct result of a fight. Unfortunately, drivers are killed racing cars, mountain climbers die pursuing their passion, and divers drown when they go too deep. That doesn't mean these sports should be banned.

Fighting is part of hockey, always has been and always should be.

Jim Van Horne is a veteran Canadian broadcaster.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

Move to charge riders to park at TTC lots regrettable

As a loyal TTC rider for the past 34 years, I wish to express my sincere regret that the TTC has decided to once again apply a parking charge at commuter lots.

My monthly expenses will drastically increase, approximately 100 per cent, as I will need to accumulate $6 per day in loonies and toonies. This is the current rate for commuters who have no Metropass when they park at the Finch lot. This will require me to pay another $120 per month as well as the monthly Metropass. I could only wish that my salary would increase by 100 per cent.

ANNE STEPHENS, THORNHILL

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Cold-FX producer reports healthy sales
Edmonton-based CV Technologies Inc., the maker of cold and flu remedy Cold-FX, has reported a 17.5 per cent sales increase in its latest financial year, with net income of $4.6 million, up from a prior-year loss of $9.8 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business

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Surveys find more gloom

Firms brace for slower sales

Canadian companies are bracing themselves for a difficult year of slower sales growth, shrinking employment and tight borrowing conditions that will further undermine the economy, two Bank of Canada surveys indicate.

The bank's quarterly survey of 100 companies finds the mood among Canada's business community decidedly dark — the most pessimistic in more than a decade — in the face of the global financial crisis and economic slowdown.

And a separate survey of senior loan officers found widespread tightening of lending conditions that will restrict businesses' ability to finance operations, expand and create new jobs.

Companies say they expect sales growth to slow, prices of products to increase at a slower pace and their workforce to shrink.

"Almost all indicators are at their lowest level since the survey began in 1997."
Bank of Canada

"Business sentiment has deteriorated markedly since the autumn survey, as the effects of the international finance crisis and the weak global economy intensified and spread to domestic demand," the Bank of Canada reported.

"Almost all indicators are at their lowest level since the survey began in 1997."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Unsafe brake pads raises concerns

DUMPED A Guelph, Ont., manufacturer of brake pads is raising concerns over "huge amounts of Chinese product dumped into Canada" particularly as there are no mandatory Canadian standards for replacement brake pads.

In simulated panic stops during ABS Friction's tests of competitive products, chief executive Rick Jamieson says some pads "self-destruct — the brake pad will literally break down." Many also contain undisclosed asbestos.

"In China, the people can make very high-quality goods, and inevitably there are some products of inferior quality," said a spokesperson in the Chinese consulate.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business in brief

CREDIT CRUNCH The value of mergers and acquisitions by Canadian companies fell 50 per cent in 2008 to $131.5 billion US as the credit crunch took the wind out of deal-makers' sails, according to a study by accounting firm KPMG. In the 1,972 deals that did occur in 2008, the metals, mining and oil and gas sectors were the dominant sectors

RIO TINTO Dick Evans is retiring as CEO of Rio Tinto Alcan, a little more than a year after guiding the $38 billion US takeover of Canada's aluminum leader. Evans will step down from the board of the London and Australian-based Rio Tinto mining giant after the annual general meeting April 20. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Reincarnated Alitalia flies again

AIRLINES Alitalia, whose 62 years as Italy's state-run company ended in bankruptcy, begins its new incarnation today as a private company with Air France-KLM as a minority shareholder alongside a group of Italian investors.

The Franco-Dutch carrier will pay $431.3 million US for a 25 per cent share in the new, slimmer company — merged with the much smaller Air One — with 148 aircraft and 12,500 employees. The logo remains the same, as do the green uniforms.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New wave of mergers forecast

BANKS Citigroup and Morgan Stanley are poised to announce a deal to combine their brokerages, a move analysts say could trigger a fresh wave of consolidation in the troubled banking industry.

The deal underscores the problems still facing the industry after a year in which well-known financial firms toppled under the weight of rising losses tied to bad mortgages.

Citigroup received $45 billion in support from the U.S. government's $700-billion US financial rescue fund. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

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Converting RRSPs to RRIFs

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong
choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Q I am approaching the age limit for retirement. If I convert all my RRSPs to RRIFs, how much capital gains tax will I pay? Secondly, what happens to my investments? Sian

A Many seniors have difficult decisions to make, particularly with losses in their pension plans savings and withdrawals. New rules have increased the age from 69 to 71 years old for collapsing your RRSPs. This effectively gives individuals two more years to contribute and delay withdrawals.

Generally, individuals at age 71 with RRSPs have three options: 1. Withdraw entire amount and pay the tax; 2. Buy an annuity; or 3. Convert to Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIFs).

According to Jose Lomonaco, a financial advisor with Edward Jones at their Toronto office, "RRIFs are the most popular choice." You will have no income taxes to pay at 71 if you choose to buy RRIFs or annuity.

With an RRIF, your investments can remain intact. The annual minimum requirement must be withdrawn and reported as income on your tax return. However, Lomonaco advises that you maintain your portfolio — individuals must deregister and transfer "in kind" the shares to a non-registered investment account.

Therefore, your stock holdings are unchanged but split between a registered and non-registered account.

These may help with your decision:

- No taxes to pay at the time RRSPs are converted to RRIFs.
- All investments remain intact. Individual continue to control assets.
- May qualify for income split up to 50 per cent of RRIF income with spouse and lower tax bill.
- Continue to defer tax on investment income.
- Income taxes due on minimum annual withdrawal requirement.

Reach Henry Choo Chong, CGA, at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca or 416-489-7800, ext. 227.

Trim up spender's flab

While we might not be sure of the economic outlook for 2009, one thing we can be sure of is there are certain habits we should all be developing right now to take us through good times and bad. So whether you are in drowning in debt, fearing job loss or no longer being footloose and fancy free, here are some of the best ways to keep your head above water in 2009.

Scrutinize Spending

Have a gym membership you never use? Overspending on eating out? Overboard on giving gifts? The numbers don't lie. If you don't know what is coming in and what is going out every month, then it's impossible to see where you can make changes. Sometimes the simplest changes can have the greatest impact. Track your spending for one month (minimum) and at the end of the month take a hard look at your spending.

Become your Own Advocate

Make 2009 your year to advocate for lower interest rates on all of your loans. If you are carrying a balance on your credit cards, work to transfer the debt to one low interest line of credit or credit card so you are only making payments on this account.

Have a gym membership you never use? Get rid of it.

Barter Smarter

If you have a skill, service or talent, try bartering. You can barter everything from dog sitting to personal training. We barter cooking classes, marketing and PR services, and childcare.

Pay the Taxman Less

If you have not done so already, now is the time to open your Tax Free Savings Account. This is your year to maximize the new Tax Free Savings Accounts as well as your RRSPs. If you have lost money in the stock market, which most of us have, you can also write off that loss against your taxes.

Save 20 per cent on Your Entertainment Costs

Most of us spend an average of $500 a month on meals out and entertainment with family and friends. Lowering that cost by just $100 a month would save you $1,200 a year. Simple ways to do that include packing your own lunch, switching from a latté to a regular coffee, and using two-for-ones coupons for movies and day trips.

Start a Money Group

For us, the key to financial success began with our Money Group. Whether it is with your better half, your friends or your family, setting a regular time to make a spending plan, review your objectives and brainstorm ways to make more money will not only help you reach your financial goals faster but ensure you stay on track — and have fun doing so!

Visit smartcookies.com for more saving tips and e-mail questions or comments to smartcookies@metronews.ca.

Make 2009 your year to advocate for lower interest rates on all of your loans.

Tune in Monday nights at 10:30 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

This is the year to make the most of your RRSP contribution. Read this week's column at metronews.ca

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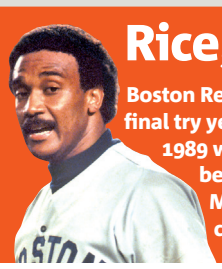
Another cover for LeBron

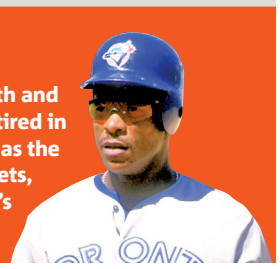
LeBron James will appear on the February cover of GQ Magazine. Posing in a grey suit, pink shirt and grey tie, James added the GQ cover to his run of magazine fronts from Sports Illustrated to Fortune to Vogue, in which he was the first black male to appear on the cover in the magazine's 116-year history. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Rice, Rickey headed to Cooperstown

Boston Red Sox legend Jim Rice, left, was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame on his 15th and final try yesterday, while Rickey Henderson made it in his first year of eligibility. Rice retired in 1989 with 382 home runs and 1,451 RBIs in 16 seasons. Henderson, widely regarded as the best leadoff hitter ever, played for the A's, Yankees, Blue Jays, Padres, Angels, Mets, Mariners, Red Sox and Dodgers over 25 years and holds Major League Baseball's career records for runs and stolen bases. METRO NEWS SERVICES



JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Luongo declares himself healthy

NHL Vancouver Canucks goalie Roberto Luongo returned to practice yesterday and declared he is "back to 100 per cent" after missing most of the last two months with a groin injury.

"We're full go right now, I did everything in practice, I didn't hold anything back," said Luongo, who also skated with a handful of teammates Sunday.

Luongo, who has missed 23 games since collapsing in a heap five minutes into a Nov. 22 game in Pittsburgh, said the only thing keeping him from returning to the lineup is a return to form. The two-time Vezina Trophy finalist insisted he hasn't set a return date, saying he is "doubtful" tonight against New Jersey, but listed himself day-to-day, making Thursday against Phoenix possible.

Luongo is 11-5-2 and ranks in the top five with both a 2.17 goals-against average. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Raps battle hard, fall in OT

NBA RESULT

Raptors 109 | **Celtics** 115

Paul Pierce scored nine of his season-high 39 points in overtime as the Boston Celtics beat the Toronto Raptors for the second consecutive day, 115-109 last night.

One day after Ray Allen's 36 points led Boston to a 94-88 win in Toronto, Pierce led a comeback from a 10-point deficit midway through the third quarter to carry the Celtics to their second straight win after losing four in a row.

Pierce also had nine rebounds, while Kevin Garnett added 20 points and 12 rebounds.

Andrea Bargnani, whose three-pointer with one second left sent the game into overtime tied at 93, led the Raptors with 23 points, while Chris Bosh had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

The Celtics never trailed in overtime as Pierce scored the first basket, a three-pointer. After Anthony Parker sank a turnaround shot from the baseline, Pierce connected from the top of the key for a 98-95 lead. Boston led by at least three points the rest of the way.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fast facts

- Andrea Bargnani finished with 23 points. He is averaging 20.6 points per game in January.
- Celtics forward Kevin Garnett scored 20 points, surpassing the 21,000 mark for his career.
- Boston has won 11 of its last 13 home games against the Raptors, including two straight.

CHARLES KRUPA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paul Pierce, left, battles Jamario Moon for a loose ball last night. Toronto's Andrea Bargnani forced overtime with one second left in regulation, but the Raptors ultimately lost 115-109.

Grand jury to look at Clemens case

BASEBALL A U.S. federal grand jury is investigating whether Roger Clemens lied to Congress last year, two people briefed on the matter told The Associated Press yesterday. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because grand jury proceedings are supposed to be secret.

Clemens

U.S. Congress asked the Justice Department to look into whether the seven-time Cy Young Award winner lied last February when he testified under oath at a deposition and a public House hearing that he never took illegal performance-enhancing drugs. That contradicted the sworn testimony of his former personal trainer Brian McNamee, who said under oath that he injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

NFL Tony Dungy has retired after seven years as coach of the Indianapolis Colts, saying this was the right moment. "These seven years have been better than I could ever have imagined," Dungy, the only black coach to win a Super Bowl, said at a news conference yesterday. He will be replaced by associate coach Jim Caldwell. Dungy has spent the past five years debating whether to leave football to spend more time with his family. He said he and his wife discussed the decision.

Dungy

"We just felt this was the right time," Dungy said. "Don't shed any tears for me. I got to live a dream most people don't get to live."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL The Denver Broncos introduced Josh McDaniels as their new head coach yesterday. McDaniels signed a four-year contract and becomes the 12th head coach in team history. The former Patriots offensive co-ordinator is just 32.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

NBA Houston Rockets guard Tracy McGrady will miss the next two weeks to rest his sore left knee. The seven-time all-star had minor surgery on his knee in May and has struggled to regain strength in his left leg.

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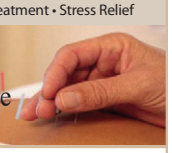

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Wrigley game draws largest U.S. NHL regular season TV audience in 34 years

The NHL Winter Classic drew the biggest American TV audience for a regular-season game in nearly 34 years, NBC said yesterday. The Red Wings' 6-4 win over the Blackhawks at Wrigley Field on New Year's Day attracted an average of 4.4 million viewers on NBC, the most since a Flyers-Rangers game on Feb. 23, 1975. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Poker champ laughing all the way to the bank

En route to the bank yesterday with his newly acquired millions, poker's latest whiz kid couldn't quite decide how he'd like his name spelled.

"I've spelled it Pooria, with an I, since I was little, but all my documents spell it Poorya, with a Y," he told me, "so what the heck? Go with the Y."

All rightie, then, Poorya Nazari it is. And rich is what this 22-year-old from Richmond Hill, Ont., is since collecting — and depositing — the $3 million US he garnered for finishing first on the weekend at the PokerStars Caribbean Adventure, the largest tournament outside Las Vegas.

Nazari's initial buy-in online was a mere $33, and he was one of 1,347 who qualified to participate in six days of play at Paradise Island in the Bahamas last week.

"I seriously started playing online (at pokerstars.net) last December and I was doing well, so I realized maybe I can do this for a living," Nazari mentioned on his way to his bank. "Even when I was in school, I spent most of my time playing poker."

Nazari graduated with a biochemistry degree from McMaster University last month but "my marks suffered and I barely scraped by with a degree."

Doesn't much matter to him at this point, he said.

CNW GROUP/POKERSTARS.NET

Poorya Nazari of Richmond Hill brought home $3 million from the Bahamas.

Oh, and a warning to anyone planning to ask him for loans: "The answer, more than likely, will be no."

• After attending and observing the Caribbean tourney, incidentally, I've decided poker qualifies as a sport — a mind sport.

Players can't win without fierce, competitive mindsets. And one of the toughest is a diminutive dynamo from Victoriaville, Que. — Isabelle (No Mercy) Mercier, who gave up her law practice for poker and has made hundreds of thousands at the table. She's fascinating. To find out why, check out my feature on her in Metro and at metronews.ca later this week.

• In baseball, don't be surprised if the Blue Jays soon appoint Washington Nationals president Stan Kasten as their new prez. It's essentially a done deal ... Kasten is also ex-bossman of the Atlanta Braves, who, by the way, are close to signing two prominent free agents — pitcher Derek Lowe and outfielder Adam Dunn ... The latest in the personal affairs of the New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez: He and Madonna are no more, but he dated actress Kate Hudson on the weekend ... And, yes, Rickey Henderson was a no-brainer for Hall of Fame nomination yesterday because he was the most prolific leadoff batter in history.

But what about Tim Raines, the second-best leadoff batter in history? Will he be perpetually bypassed by Hall voters because, like the perpetually bypassed Andre Dawson, he excelled with the old Montreal Expos?

Penn. Bowl?

• Oddsmakers are anticipating an all-Pennsylvania Super Bowl, listing the Philadelphia Eagles as three-point favourites over the Arizona Cardinals in Sunday's NFC final and the Pittsburgh Steelers as six-point favourites over the Ravens in the AFC final.

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

Soccer Marta, Ronaldo take home honours

JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

FIFA Women's World Player of the Year Marta, left, FIFA president Sepp Blatter, centre, and FIFA Men's World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo pose with their hardware yesterday.

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Learning Curve is a monthly feature that focuses on education and student life. Next month's issue comes out on Feb. 10.

Learning Curve

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Adults make time for school

Former students return to gain competitive edge

More adults are heading back to the classroom, experts say, and they're doing it for a number of reasons: Staying competitive in an unstable job market, networking with peers in the field and having a fun night out.

"In a softening economy, you want to make sure you make your resumé and employment as recession-proof as possible," said Julia Hanigsberg, dean of the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University. "By updating your skills, you make yourself more desirable to your current employer. Another reason is that in the current economic times, your employment might be precarious, so you need to make yourself more employable in a wider sector."

"By updating your skills, you make yourself more desirable to your current employer."
Julia Hanigsberg

Among the most popular disciplines in which adults enrol, according to Hanigsberg, are courses dealing with environmental issues and sustainability, food security and health services — fields with growing demands.

"People often don't have static careers the way they might have (had) in the past," Hangisberg said.

"In today's knowledge-based economy, you need to have skills that are transferable and nimble. There are always ways to increase your skills and knowledge."

Though you can still learn and stay where you are. Christina Fougere has worked at the same telecommunications company for 20 years in a number of positions. As a student pursuing a project management professional designation, Fougere says what she's learned has made her job easier to do.

"I was nervous at first, but I would say the benefits outweigh any apprehensions you might have," she said. "I would encourage any adult to get into it. It's certainly given me more confidence at my job."

Adults do, however, face some obstacles in going back to school, such as time constraints.

But schools must do their best to accommodate, says Lorna Prediger, marketing and communications manager for the University of Calgary's department of Continuing Education.

The University of Calgary has made it a top priority, Prediger said.

Online course enrolment has increased dramatically as a result, notes Hanigsberg. "Most of our adult students are fully employed. They need to do learning on their own schedule to fit it into their work and family obligations."

In Fougere's case, the biggest benefit is that she gets a little time away from those obligations.

"Class is a fun night out; for a few hours I'm not a wife, a mom or a co-worker. I'm a student," she laughs. METRO NEWS SERVICES

More adults are choosing to go back to school for many reasons, including staying competitive and networking with peers.

Help from provincial government

- Second Career is an Ontario government program that offers training for a new job, including financial support. It provides career planning and financial support specially designed to help laid-off Ontarians participate in long-term training for a new job. Career counsellors in Employment Ontario offices across the province can help you take the first step.

SOURCE: EDU.GOV.ON.CA

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BE JOB READY IN MONTHS!

Learning Curve is a monthly feature that focuses on education and student life. Next month's issue comes out on Feb. 10.

Initiative tackles family literacy

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

You might have heard, "Pick up a book; TV just rots your brain," when you were a kid. Turns out that might have been right.

Young and old alike will crack spines together on Jan. 23 for Family Literacy Day, an initiative sponsored by private sector literacy foundation ABC Canada. The date will feature various events nationwide aimed at promoting reading and breaking a Guinness World Record for Most Children Reading With An Adult, Multiple Locations.

The activity, however, may prove more important for adults than kids. The latest data (2003) from Statistics Canada and the international Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revealed disturbing numbers. Four out of 10 Canadians aged 16 to 65 have problems reading material beyond a Grade 11 level, with 16 per cent of Canadians struggling with a reading level above Grades 5 or 6.

"It's concerning because while our economy in the past has given us lots of jobs for people with low skills, those jobs are disappearing very quickly," says Margaret Eaton, president of ABC Canada. "As the labour market changes, Canadians are not going to have the skills they need to participate."

The problem transcends economic concerns, notes Eaton. Poor reading skills can lead to misunderstanding food and prescription drug labels, poor workplace safety, barriers to comprehending public information and less civic engagement.

In his 2007 book, The Assault On Reason, former U.S. vice-president Al Gore cites television, not the printed word, as the chief means of gaining information about the world around us, a one-way medium that by its visceral nature hinders reflective thought and reasoned public discourse.

Family Literacy Day — which aims to promote reading — takes place Jan. 23

Eaton is reticent to "make television the villain." Shame tops the list of a number of barriers that adults face. Much like recovering from alcoholism, admitting the problem is the first step to solving it.

"It's hard to learn to read."
Margaret Eaton

"A lot of people end up masking their issues. They have coping strategies they use instead of trying to face it head on," she said. "It's hard to learn to read, particularly for those who have learning disabilities who didn't get them addressed early on."

But rising mediums may yield a brighter future. While they won't teach literacy, text-heavy websites will certainly encourage it, Eaton said.

"Computers, video games, all of those mediums involve a lot of text reading and can be a tremendous boon," she said.

"We suggest you surf the net or play video games with your kids, because those are the kinds of family activities that promote literacy."

Canadians find job market depressing: Survey

More than 60 per cent of Canadians are feeling unhappy about their work and the crumbling economy, a recent survey shows.

NOELLE MUNARETTO
for Metro Canada

Canadians will awake to face the most depressing day of the entire year on Monday.

The event, nicknamed Blue Monday, was originally conceived by a British researcher who theorized that cold weather, holiday bills and broken new year's resolutions leave people down in the dumps.

However, a recent survey by Everest College and Harris/Decima found that more than 60 per cent of Canadians are actually feeling most unhappy about their work and the crumbling economy.

"Part of the depression ... was that people didn't see any growth for them in the next year or two in their job." Don Thibert

Don Thibert, director of academic affairs for Everest Canada, says that even though many factors point to an impending recession, this can be the best time to develop new skill sets and career options.

"There's a great opportunity to take advantage of the programs that are out there to go and get retrained," says Thibert. "Take a look at the careers that really don't experience big fluctuations in employment based on economic trends."

Aside from providing more job security, re-training for a more recession-proof field means you are more likely to advance in that area in the future.

"Part of the depression in the survey was that people didn't see any growth for them in the next year or two in their job," says Thibert. "There's a natural, inherent part in every human that we would like to see ourselves progress."

Thibert also says those who think proactively, by training for a career they love, will be better prepared to stick through tough financial times.

"Never stop learning. You can never have too many skills," he says.

Anthony Oliver, a network security specialist student at Everest, spent years in dead-end jobs before he realized a change was necessary.

"I wanted a role that meant something. Rather than just being a worker, I wanted a career," he said. "Without education you're going to be doing jobs without growth. The more education you have the more opportunities for career advancement you have."

Though Oliver was employed as a security guard, he left the position despite the economic uncertainty around him. He began researching careers on the Internet and said he found the IT industry was still prospering.

Like Thibert, Oliver says prospective students can seek help from provincial programs aimed at guiding people towards the right career path.

"Knowing there might be an economy crunch, if you have the opportunity to get funding for training then go for it," he adds.

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Job autonomy blurs work-life balance: Study

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

People who make their own schedules tend to bring more work home, creating greater potential for family conflict, a recent study shows.

The study by University of Toronto sociology Prof. Scott Schieman and doctoral candidate Paul Glavin surveyed 2,600 American workers. It found that those with the most job autonomy and control of their work schedules were more likely to bring extra work home with them or continue to send out work-related e-mails and make business calls.

Bringing more work home can cause more stress, a study says.

Bringing more work home can cause more stress because it can cause the line between work and family life to disappear.

"Generally, people who had more schedule control and job autonomy had more work-family role blurring, and that's a big predictor of stress for most people. It's also a key indicator of work-family conflict," Schieman said.

The lesson is that while taking calls on your BlackBerry at dinner might help you get some extra work done, it certainly won't endear you to your family and is a likely sign you haven't let go of the workplace.

> **"Having more schedule control and job autonomy often makes it hard to turn work off."**
> Scott Schieman

"Having more schedule control and job autonomy often makes it hard to turn work off. If something still needs to be done after you've clocked out, you haven't really clocked out," Schieman said.

While modern technology has made greater flexibility in the workplace possible, Schieman says freedom comes with a new price: Expectation.

"The flexibility cuts both ways because you're always available and people in the workplace know that. The old idea of 'normal' work hours just seems to be redefined for many people," he said.

Along with a greater expectation that you'll be available at all hours, greater stress and responsibility often increase as well, since gaining more freedom over your schedule and hours usually means a promotion of some kind. As a result, Schieman says it can be hard to turn the phone off, even if you want to.

"There's an obligatory side to (bringing work home) that puts pressure on people. Higher status work comes with greater responsibility and no one wants to be seen as a slacker," Schieman said.

Ultimately, Schieman hopes the study will shed light on one of the downsides of work with "flexible" hours.

"Most people see greater schedule control and autonomy as positive things, but they can cause difficulties for people trying to keep a balance between their work and family lives," he said.

Walking conference room a hit

For anyone who has ever sat through a meeting with long-winded speakers and diet-busting doughnuts, Jennifer Baran offers an antidote.

In her "walking conference room," there is no sitting through anything. Everyone is walking on treadmills or elliptical machines.

The rest of the room, which Baran recently began renting out at the suburban Buffalo health centre she owns, looks like almost any other meeting room with its monitor for PowerPoint presentations, conferencing telephone and coffee pot. Only here, participants work out while they work.

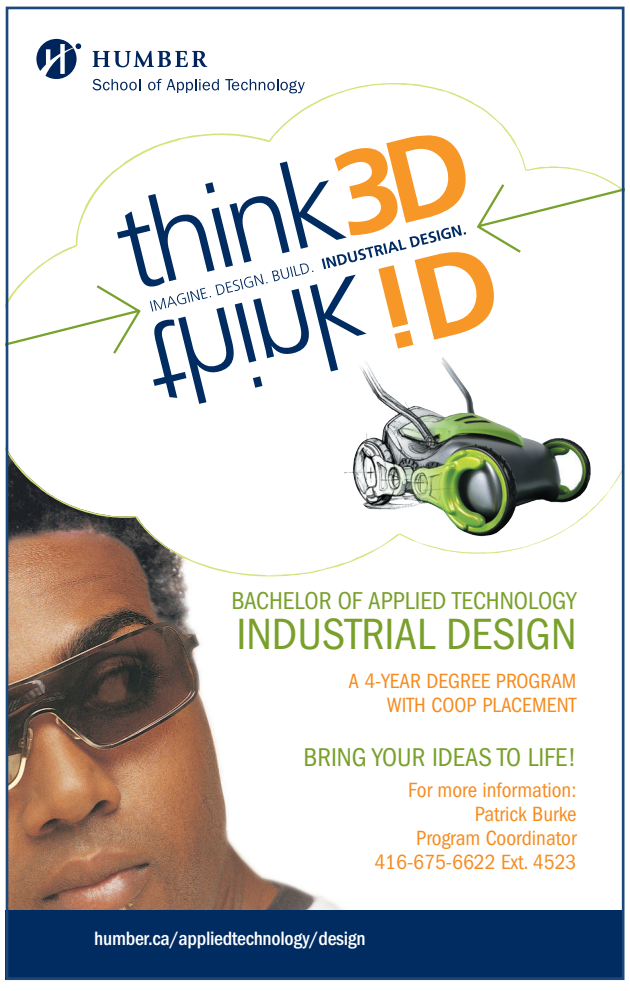
There are potential pitfalls — sweating in front of your colleagues, for one thing. But on the upside, comfy T-shirts and sweats replaced anything dry-clean only, and monitors on the machines flashed calories burned, a reminder the meeting was productive from a health standpoint, too. Another benefit: This is not a forum where rambling off-topic tangents would be tolerated, or even possible. There's nothing like a little burn to keep a speaker on point.

Baran opened her Healthy Living Support Network to offer nutrition and fitness education, and motivation. For the walking conference room, she drew inspiration from Dr. James Levine, a Mayo Clinic obesity researcher who assembled his own walking desk after publishing a study that found thin people were on their feet an average of two hours more and burned 350 more calories daily than those who are obese.

Pacing or fidgeting, considered non-exercise activity, makes a difference.

"We're trying to incorporate exercise into everyday life," said Baran, who has a master's degree in social work and was recently certified as a personal trainer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Seneca program a first in Ontario

JOSEPHINE LIM
for Metro Canada

Caitlin Woodroof hopes to be a teacher for Grades 3 to 5 and is also interested in teaching kids with special needs.

With her wide range of interests, she switched from studying English and psychology at Wilfrid Laurier to the first bachelor of child development in Ontario at Seneca College.

"It provides such a broad foundation I think," says Woodroof, who started in September. "Even though it's child development and it's about early childhood education, you can still take it any direction you want to."

This is exactly why Mary Fisher, the chair at the school of early childhood at Seneca College, created the degree, which launched in September 2008.

"It's basically an interdisciplinary approach to early learning and care," says Fisher, who has been working on the program for about six years.

"For too long one person is taking care of the child's health and one person teaching."

In the four-year program, students learn how to teach and create programs for children. They also learn about brain development, psychological attachment disorder and the effects of trauma on learning.

The program combines practical with theory, offering three field placements and one internship. There is also an emphasis on ensuring students are taught leadership skills.

When students graduate, Fisher says they can move into various family related jobs, such as in any family service programs, young early school centres, children's treatment centres and elementary schools.

"If they work in a child-care centre and the child's speech is not developing, they will work with the family and break the news to them. Then, they will facilitate the speech and language people," says Fisher.

"They will advocate and be the person who can work with the other professionals to make sure this family's needs are met."

The program is currently only offered at the college's King campus, but Fisher says she expects they'll expand it into the Newnham campus.

Students in the bachelor of child development program learn how to teach and create programs for children.

As for Woodroof, she's enjoying the change from university to college.

"Kind of a mix in the class, few right from high school, but I say the majority is continuing education (students)," says Woodroof. "It's a nice mix and it's a small class."

Centennial offering help to job seekers

ERIC EMIN WOOD
for Metro Canada

Whether laid off, recently immigrated, soon-to-be-graduated, or just plain frustrated with their current position, job seekers can find help at Centennial College.

At least twice per semester, Centennial offers Choosing the Right Career, one of multiple "success workshops" designed to help workers in a state of transition.

"A lot of people don't have career-planning skills," says Steven Ruhinda, a counsellor with Centennial's career and counselling centre, who teaches the course. "Some people just go into a career because that's what their parents wanted them to do, or they'll be in a program and they're not doing well. Others work survival jobs — they need to feed their family and now realize this is not going to take them anywhere."

Many students who sign up for Choosing the Right Career aren't sure where their programs are leading them, says Ruhinda, while others have steady jobs, but would like to change careers. "The course helps them assess their interests and skills in light of the changing economy, and then research the choices that are out there," he says.

> **"A lot of people don't have career-planning skills."**
> Steven Ruhinda

Each four-hour workshop begins with a self-assessment. "A lot of students haven't put together an inventory of their interests, skills and values," says Ruhinda. Once the students recognize their interests, counsellors help them create a list of careers.

"Each person is different and we try to customize a plan for every attendant," Ruhinda says.

Feedback has been positive. "It's better than just handing people jobs," or showing them a list of programs, says Ruhinda. "You find out what you want to do and then we can train you in it, or if we don't have it, we can advise you on a place that provides training."

The number of classes offered per semester is based on the number of people who sign up, so no applicant is turned away.

The next Choosing the Right Career workshop will be offered on Feb. 21. The registration fee is $10. To sign up, visit centennialcollege.ca/parttime/InterestWorkshop.

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Faculty lecture hits T.O.

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Sometimes, you've got to make stuff up to tell the truth.

Writers like Angel at the Fence's Herman Rosenblat and A Million Little Pieces's James Frey both got into Oprah-sized trouble when they went too far down that road and their holocaust and childhood memoirs were revealed as fakes, but journalist and novelist Stephen Kimber says they reveal the complicated landscape between fiction and non-fiction.

Kimber, the Rogers Communication Chair in Journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, is going to be in Toronto on Jan. 29 and Ottawa on Feb. 2 to deliver his talk on the topic, "Truth, Lies and Non-Fiction," as part of a Faculty Lecture Tour. He danced that line himself in Reparations, his novel about the forced closure of Halifax's black community Africville and political corruption in 1960s Nova Scotia.

"I went to fiction because the stories I wanted to tell were stories I couldn't tell in non-fiction," he says. He had covered the events as a young reporter but, for legal reasons, couldn't write a non-fictional account. There was much speculation about which characters matched to which real people, but Kimber kept tight-lipped.

"I started out with this real-life incident I wanted to write about, but couldn't. It morphed into something entirely different. It better conveyed the reality I wanted to convey, but it's not true."

He brings up Dave Eggers. His A Staggering Work of Heartbreaking Genius is an autobiography, but the beast of a book is full of admittedly faulty memories and sections the author freely makes up. Eggers's second book, What is the What, is a true biography of a Sudanese "Lost Boy," but he called it fiction because he couldn't confirm some of the details.

"That's a pretty rigid line that he's drawn," Kimber says.

"It comes down to intent. Fiction writers have no obligation to truth, other than that for however long that you're reading the book, it be believable."

But he says non-fiction writers make a pact with the reader that the story will be as true as the writer can make it.

"When we read fiction, we're looking for a kind of truth. When we read non-fiction, we expect that the facts are true, and it can be that much more powerful; that's why people lie."

For information on the talk, contact Rachel Pink at (902) 422-1271 ext 152, or rachel.pink@ukings.ns.ca.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Oprah Winfrey challenged author James Frey, left, over his disputed memoir A Million Little Pieces.

"I went to fiction because the stories I wanted to tell were stories I couldn't tell in non-fiction."
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Earn credits for job experience

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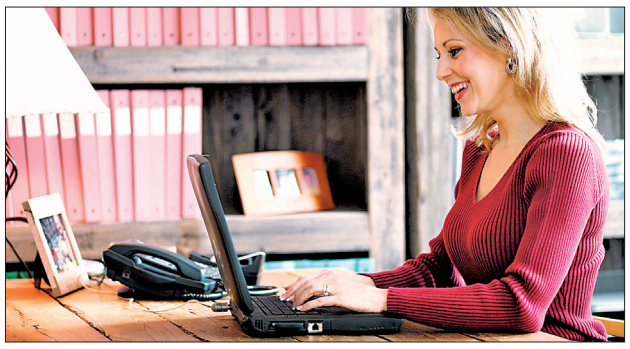

You may be able to turn your work experience into course credit.

Going back to school after having spent years in the working world can be a big adjustment.

Not only do you have to get back into the habit of studying and doing assignments, but you may also find yourself taking courses covering information you already know. For example, it may be frustrating to be required to complete a basic computer course if you have worked in an office environment and have already acquired those skills.

Most post-secondary institutions offer a process for students in this situation to demonstrate previous knowledge. If you can prove the knowledge you have gained outside of the traditional classroom (such as volunteering, employment or other study) meets the learning outcomes for a subject, you may be granted advanced standing or credit recognition.

This procedure is considered a "challenge" process that measures learning through a variety of methods, and may include tests, portfolio assessment, interviews, demonstrations, essays and work samples. Completing a prior learning assessment can be time-consuming, so I encourage you to start the process early. Every institution is different and not all courses are eligible for this status, so be sure to research what your school requires. You may also be expected to pay a fee for the assessment.

"If you can prove the knowledge you have gained outside the traditional classroom meets the learning outcomes for a subject, you may be granted advanced standing or credit recognition."

When determining if this process is right for you, review subject outlines, which can be obtained from the registration department or your school's website. Match your knowledge base with the learning outcomes on the subject outline. The next step often involves scheduling a meeting, usually with the program coordinator or faculty to determine if the challenge is appropriate for you. After completing the required tasks and being formally evaluated, a grade is recorded. If your challenge is approved, you would not have to take the course and will have a reduced workload. If the challenge is denied, you would be informed and advised to take the full course load.

Going back to school either full-time or part-time is commendable. You will, no doubt, learn a great deal throughout your new endeavour. However, do not minimize your current knowledge, abilities or previous experience. As Zig Ziglar once said, "Success is the maximum utilization of the ability that you have."

Tracy Rogers is the Career Services Co-ordinator for Seneca College, Seneca@York Campus.

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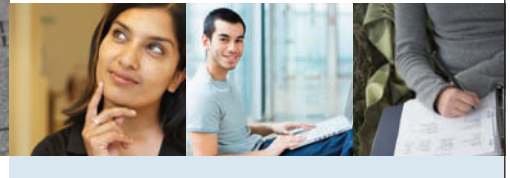

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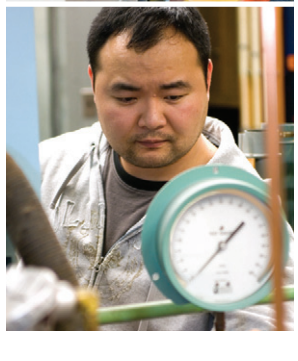

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Empathy Suit simulates aging

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

A Canadian professor has created an "Empathy Suit" to simulate the effects of aging.

Glen Hougan, who teaches product design at NSCAD University in Halifax, says people who work with the elderly, or design aids for them, should strap on the suit to get an inside feel for the problems of growing old.

"As a society, we don't do a good job of understanding the aging process and then adapting our environment," Hougan said. "The Empathy Suit is great because you put it on and it's like: OK, I get it."

The suit restricts movement around the knees, hips, shoulders, elbows, neck, wrist and hands. A strap-on pot belly simulates weight gain and various mechanisms stoop posture. Two layers of gloves reduce tactility and simulate poor circulation. The legs are tied together to imitate reduced stride and bad slippers create poor balance.

JON TATTRIE/FOR METRO CANADA

Glen Hougan, left, helps Rich Collier of PBS into the Empathy Suit.

As if that wasn't enough, goggles simulate a range of visual problems, from macro degeneration to eye hemorrhages and "floaters" — spots on your eyes. A straw gives the user a sense of what reduced lung capacity feels like and ear muffs reduce hearing.

"What does arthritis feel like? What does it feel like to not be able to bend over and tie your shoes?" asked Hougan. "Physiologically, it simulates what it might feel like as you age."

Products to help the aging have been stuck on ugly for decades, Hougan says, and that's going to change.

"The Baby Boomers are coming through the system," he said. "A lot of the products right now are badly designed. They have that smell of the hospital to them, that cold, institutional look. They function very well, but man, they look ugly.

"The classic case is the orthopedic shoe — those big gorilla boots have been around for 40 years and haven't been redesigned. Can't we find a more elegant solution for the problem?"

> **"Physiologically, (the Empathy Suit) simulates what it might feel like as you age."**
> Glen Hougan

Boomers will want aids that work well and look good. "I see a huge opportunity to redesign everything," he said. Better-designed products will also cut back on falls, improving quality of life and cutting health-care costs.

Hougan's Empathy Suit has attracted world-wide attention. On the day Metro visited NSCAD's waterfront campus, Rich Collier of PBS had flown in from Manhattan to film a segment.

"It does not take the place of talking to seniors; it's just an added tool," Hougan said. "It gives you a little bit of added insight."

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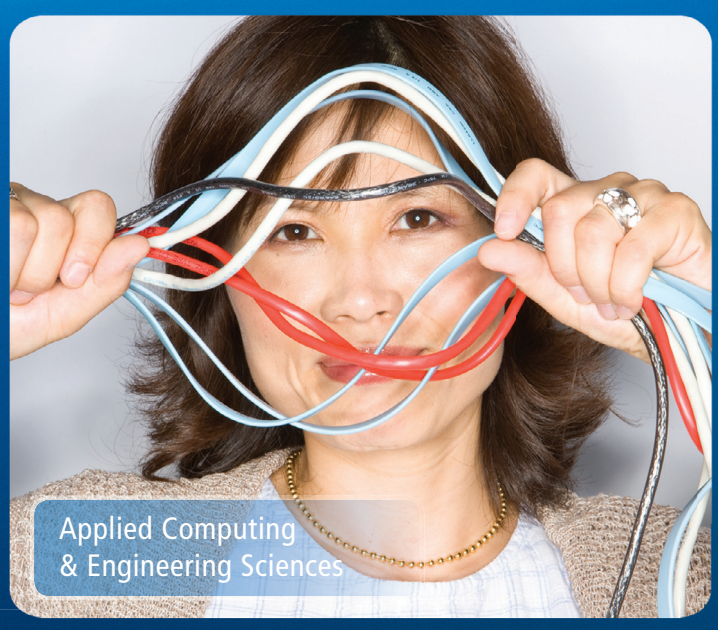
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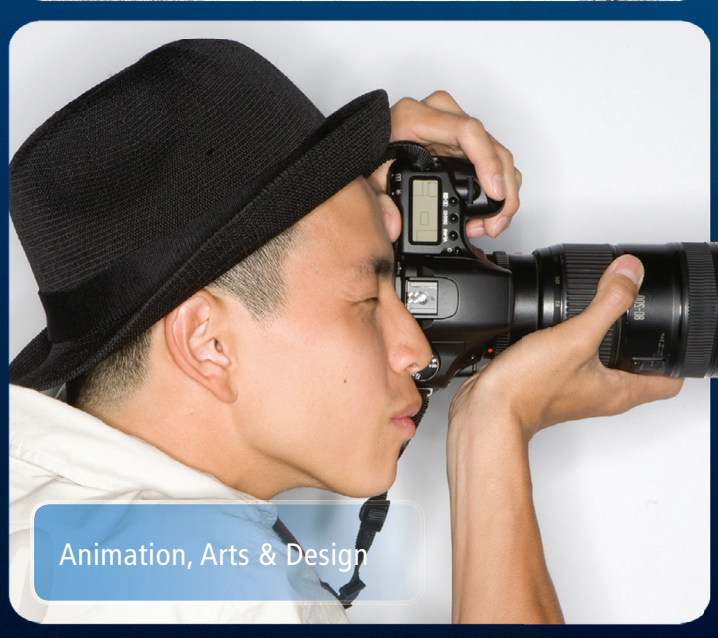
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Home reno program filling up

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

If you've always wanted to learn how to renovate a house, a new program at Humber might be for you.

Hoping to capitalize on the home renovation industry, the Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning will offer a Home Renovation Technician diploma program at its Toronto and Orangeville campuses starting in September.

The intensive one-year program will run a full 12 months through the summer of 2010, letting students complete the equivalent of four semesters of study in three semesters — essentially doing a two-year diploma in one year.

"It's for people who want to build things — it's designed to provide them an opportunity to get their hands dirty," said Joe Andrews, director of Humber's Orangeville campus.

Guy Morrison, co-ordinator of the program at Humber, says students will get to put their renovation skills to the test in a real-world setting as Humber is building two houses in a special warehouse near campus.

"When students will install a kitchen or a bathroom, they'll actually do it in a real house, so it's a lot more realistic," Morrison said.

With decades of renovation experience himself as a carpenter and electrician, Morrison says the thrill he still gets out of doing a renovation work boils down to the knowledge that you've done a good day's work.

"The satisfaction of seeing the finished product and knowing that you did it — that's something I still don't know how to describe, but it's a good feeling," Morrison said.

Humber is taking 20 students for the program at the Orangeville campus and 20 at its Rexdale campus in Toronto in September and 40 more Toronto students in the spring of 2010.

Spots are filling up quickly, so Morrison suggests getting in touch with Humber before the end of January if you're interested.

You can find out more about the program at humber.ca or contact Guy Morrison directly at guy.morrison@humber.ca.

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Metro Workology exclusive: Curtain Call
Don't miss Curtain Call, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. In the realm of death there are some interesting, lucrative and mysterious career opportunities; we will be digging up the stories for you, so check for Workology on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Metronews.ca/work as well.

Workology

Sit-in charges

According to The Varsity, a University of Toronto student newspaper, nine of the 14 individuals arrested in connection to a four-hour sit-in at an administration building last March have had the charges against them dropped.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

They're dead, but how?

Curtain Call

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

When a medical mystery comes to a dead end, they call in Marnie Wood. The forensic pathologist for the Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service studies the bodies of people who have died of diseases or unnatural injuries like gunshot wounds and car crashes.

"I love it," she says. "What interests me is finding out the answers to questions and making the pieces of the puzzle fall together."

In the course of the 250 autopsies she does annually, she works with a crack team of police officers, forensic anthropologists, forensic dentists and toxicologists to figure out how the dead person got that way.

"I get to do autopsies some days, to look at things under the microscope and do readings around cases. One day I might go out to a scene and the next day testify in court."

When a body makes its way to Wood, her three tasks are to identify the person, determine the cause of death and then determine the manner of death (murder, suicide or natural causes.) She testifies in murder cases, but she's never been concerned for her safety.

"You spend so much of the rest of medicine learning to keep people alive, yet here you are with this person who is already gone." Marnie Wood

"Most of the cases that go to court, it wasn't much of a mystery. The people were shot or stabbed," she says. Her evidence is important, but it's not going to make the case.

Wood first learned about forensic pathology like most of us: through TV shows such as Quincy. She warns, however, reality isn't a TV show.

"We're not quite as pretty," she laughs. "We don't have fashion co-ordinators."

They also don't have the firm answers of the cast of CSI; it's usually more grey than black and white. Wood did, however, rub shoulders with crime writer Patricia Cornwell when Wood was training in Richmond, Virginia.

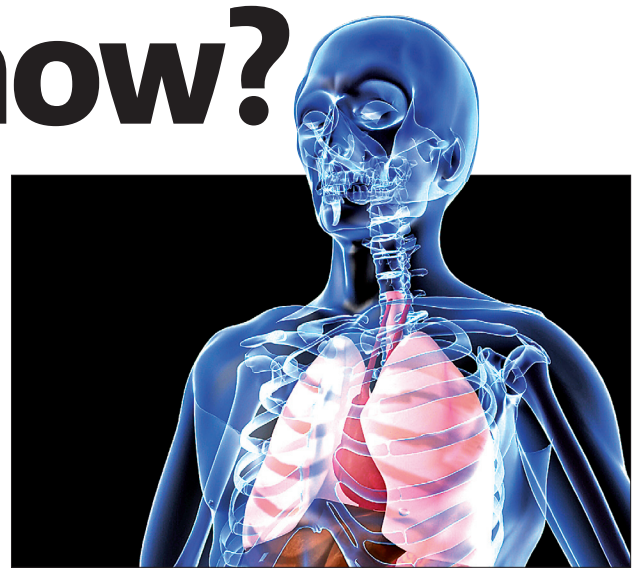
Some cases hit hard, but most of the time the mystery takes centre stage. "You focus on finding the answers," Wood says. "I find it really interesting and satisfying."

Her first autopsy was in a hospital during her medical degree. She was hooked straight away. "You spend so much of the rest of medicine learning to keep people alive, yet here you are with this person who is already gone."

It became her passion. After a quick 14 years of education including a BSC, medical degree and five years of anatomical pathology, she was ready to start.

Forensic pathologists study the bodies of people who have died.

For more of the Curtain Call exclusive series check the Workology section Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays or stop by Metronews.ca/work



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Some programs longer than one year.

Make a snow angel, help charity

Making angels in the snow now has a charitable twist. Simply upload a photo of yourself making a snow angel to curel.ca and the makers of Curel moisturizers will donate one dollar to Starlight Children's Foundation, which helps seriously ill children. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Heart attacks increase in cold

Some need to consult doctor before shovelling

JOSEPHINE LIM
for Metro Canada

When the weather outside is frightful, keep bundled up and warm this winter because heart attacks are more likely to happen.

A study conducted by the Cardiovascular Thrombosis Research Centre at the University of Massachusetts found within a total of 259,894 cases of heart attacks, about 102,725 cases were reported in the spring, while about 157,169 cases were reported in the winter. That's an approximate 53 per cent increase in the colder months.

Dr. Milan Gupta, a cardiologist at the William Osler Health Centre in Brampton, says this happens for many reasons.

"One is simply the cold weather," he says. "The cold temperature increases blood pressure, which increases heart rate and increases inflammation in the body. All of these things indirectly increase the rate of heart attack."

A change in lifestyle, such as less physical activity, eating richer foods, more drinking, more smoking and weight gain during the holiday season also contribute.

One of the major causes for increased heart attacks is snow shovelling, says Gupta.

Dr. Rakesh Bhargava, the director of Heart Care Research Coronary Prevention and Rehab Program in Oshawa, says it's the reason many experience their first heart attack.

"Basically people with a sedentary lifestyle are not used to doing sudden, big physical exertion, such as shovelling snow," says Bhargava. "There are some symptoms that are ignored and they think they don't need to worry about it."

Also, many people don't know the symptoms of heart trouble, he says. If a person is feeling heaviness or pressure in the chest, shortness of breath, sweating or nausea, these are symptoms of Angina, a precursor to a heart attack.

"Some people don't take a rest and symptoms become much more intensified," explains Bhargava. "If it lasts longer than 20 minutes, it can lead to a heart attack."

A heart attack is when there's more severe pain or discomfort in the chest, as well as more intensity in the previous symptoms.

For those with high blood pressure, he suggests checking with a doctor before going out to shovel snow.

Those with known heart disease should also see a doctor first and ask for a treadmill stress test to measure their blood pressure, especially if they've experienced a heart attack within the last three months.

To avoid heart attacks, Gupta suggests having a sense of what your heart risk is, maintaining a healthy diet — indulging a little, but not going overboard — and staying active year-round. "Heart disease is preventable whether you're 15 years old or 70 years old, it's not too late," he says. "Through identification of risk factors and appropriate management, we can prevent the vast majority of heart attacks in this country."

One of the major causes for increased heart attacks is snow shovelling. According to a recent study, there is an approximate 53 per cent increase of attacks in the colder months.

Shovelling tips

- Avoid caffeine or smoking before and while shovelling, keep well hydrated, dress warmly, pace yourself and listen to your body symptoms, advises Dr. Rakesh Bhargava, the director of Heart Care Research Coronary Prevention and Rehab Program in Oshawa.
- He also recommends people dress in layers, covering their neck and upper chest and wearing a scarf to cover the nose, just like skiers do.

JOSEPHINE LIM/FOR METRO CANADA

Skin care goes raw

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

PRODUCTS Building on the trend for raw food, you can now get raw skin care.

New in Canada is a line of raw and organic products developed in Salt Lake City, Utah. Livia Skin Care moisturizers, cleansers and toners contain no preservatives or harmful chemicals. They are chock full of ingredients such as organic aloe vera, organic witch hazel extract, horsetail plant, geranium, dandelion, sweet almond oil, lemongrass essential, and Ester-C. Livia calls them "nutrition for your skin."

Try Lemon Drop Moisture, Fresh Peppermint Exfoliating Cleanser or the Cucumber Spirulina Gel Masque. Livia product range in price from $35 to $74. For more information, go to liviaskincare.ca.

Left to right: Livia Apricot Enzyme Moisture ($50), Brightening Youth Serum ($32) and Green Tea Complex Toner ($35).

Dieting could aid flu virus

DIET Here's a reason to postpone your diet. Restricting calories in the winter could leave you more susceptible to the flu.

A new U.S. study has found that mice were less able to fend off the influenza virus if they were on a calorie-controlled diet.

It may be harder to ward off the flu if you are on a calorie-controlled diet.

Researchers at Michigan State University who conducted the study warned that low calorie diets may inhibit the body's natural killer cells to fight infection.

Authors suggest waiting until warmer weather to restrict calories, since the flu virus is so virulent in the winter.

CELIA MILNE/FOR METRO CANADA

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Recession romance

Tips on helping your relationship endure the hard times

The J Spot

Financial troubles can take a toll on your relationship. Keep things going strong by identifying and sharing ideas on how you can save money.

You can hardly turn a newspaper page these days without someone offering strategies on how to "recession-proof" something.

Recession proof your portfolio, your career, your business, your pet's retirement savings plan. How about recession-proofing your relationship?

There's no doubt that with the impending economic challenges, relationships will feel the strain. Losing your job or your home or falling on hard financial times are almost never to-do suggestions in any of those how-to-strengthen-your-relationship guidebooks.

In her predictions for 2009, Petra Boynton, a U.K. sex educator (drpetra.co.uk) foresees "increased separation and divorce rates, substance and alcohol abuse, violence within relationships, and extramarital activity."

A lost job, for example, not only results in financial strain, but there can be psychological problems faced by the person who is unemployed that can lead to tension, arguments, blame and worry. Also, as people cut back on spending, they won't be able to enjoy activities that have usually helped them bond as a couple, like travelling or nights out together.

In order to "recession-proof" your relationship, Boynton suggests working together to identify any areas where you can save money:

- Draw up a budget to see if you are wasting any cash.
- Seek financial advice if things are difficult.
- Remember that you don't have to spend money to enjoy being together. Come up with a list of free or low-cost activities — a walk in the local park, an evening where you cook a meal you share by candlelight, doing volunteer work together.
- Speak up about your concerns now. Financial issues have a habit of getting worse if you ignore them.

There's no doubt that with the impending economic challenges ahead, relationships will feel the strain.

If and when problems do come up, be sure to offer each other support rather than trying to "fix" each other's worries, adds Boynton.

If things get really tough, counselling, either individually or as a couple, may help.

However Boynton warns, don't go this route just because someone on TV or in a magazine tells you to. Less reputable "therapists" or "coaches" may take advantage of the situation to get through their own financial crisis by convincing you their services are the only way to survive.

By working together and taking the right steps to recession-proof your relationship, it may be that the financial crisis does indeed end up strengthening your relationship after all.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

Exercise can improve brain function in older women: Study

ERIC RISBERG/AP PHOTO
A Calgary study shows that women who remain active have better brain function.

Regular physical activity is known to improve cognitive ability and help stave off dementia, and now Canadian researchers think they know why.

In a small study of post-menopausal women aged 50 to 90, researchers at the University of Calgary found that those who were aerobically fit had improved blood flow to the brain, and that in turn was linked with better cognitive function.

"Being sedentary is now considered a risk factor for stroke and dementia," said principal investigator Marc Poulin, a physiologist at the University of Calgary. "This study proves for the first time that people who are fit have better blood flow to their brain."

The study involved 42 women who were divided into active and sedentary groups based on their fitness levels. In part, fitness levels were determined by questionnaires that asked about leisure, household and volunteer activities and their frequency.

"They were doing everything from walking to swimming to dancing to cross-country skiing and hiking," Poulin said of those in the physically fit group. Surprisingly, the older women were often more active than their younger counterparts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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NEW NORDIC

The Man Who Made the Whole Town Lose Weight

In the small town of Alesund in Norway, many of its residents began eating a common plant that made over 1,500 of them lose weight! It all began in 2006 when a customer of Johnny Pettersen, a local health food store owner, asked him for advice on how to eliminate sugar cravings.

"I gave my customer mulberry leaf tablets because mulberry is known to lower your blood sugar after meals. When blood sugar is stable, sugar cravings disappear. And it worked very well. I started recommending mulberry to many customers and soon noticed that they were losing weight. This made me curious, so I studied the effect of mulberries on blood sugar, insulin and fat burning. Surely enough, because of the effect on blood sugar, mulberry leaves also lead to lower insulin secretion, which makes you able to burn stored fat better and also reduces fat storage from excess calories."

The 10-day diet

When Pettersen increased the dosage, recommending two mulberry tablets before each meal, he found that his customers not only controlled their sugar cravings, but also lost significant amounts of weight.

"I recommended that customers follow the programme for a minimum of 10 days in order to eliminate their need for sugar stimulation. Sugar works as a drug on the brain and people need to eliminate the need for a 'sugar high' if they want to stay slim. Taking mulberry leaves, my customers changed to a healthier diet without even noticing it — they simply didn't crave sugar."

1500 people lost weight

After the success of the first customers, word travelled fast. In the last 12 months Pettersen has worked with over 1,500 customers in Alesund and the surrounding area. He feels that his simple and natural mulberry formula has been a tremendous success.

He concludes, "Once my customers try mulberry leaves, they come back, often with friends and family, and buy several packages. It is rewarding because I see them coming back happy, healthy and slimmer."

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JENNIFER MASSEAU
for Metro Canada

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Nivea Lip Care Lip Effect Q10 Plus, 10 mL, $4
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A baby for Bahns
Maxine Bahns, who plays Simon Baker's wife on the CBS drama The Mentalist, is pregnant with her first child, the actress tells People magazine. **PEOPLE.COM**

Entertainment

Werewolf?
Entertainment Weekly reports High School Musical star Vanessa Hudgens has auditioned to play werewolf Leah Clearwater in the Twilight sequel New Moon. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Canuck designs on Michelle Obama

Four of the country's top fashion gurus sketch looks for the next first lady

In a week's time, the question that has preoccupied style watchers for months will finally be answered. In the meantime, how about one final game of What-Will-Michelle-Obama-Wear-To-The-Inaugural-Ball?

Though her ultimate pick will almost certainly be an American, some of Canada's top fashion designers agreed to play along in case the future first lady feels a sudden urge to do a little cross-border shopping.

Wayne Clark, David Dixon, Andy Thé-Anh and Joeffer Caoc have each sketched an original gown for Mrs. O to wear on Jan. 20 when she and the new president will play host to seven balls in Washington, D.C., and attend three others on the night he's sworn in.

The first lady's gown is typically long and ornate.

"There are periods when this dress is just covered in decoration — fringe and sequins and fur and beads and lace," says Lisa Kathleen Graddy, curator of the First Ladies Exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution, where 14 inaugural dresses are on display.

Speculators predict Obama will spurn doodads in favour of a refined approach à la Jackie Kennedy in her simple, white Oleg Cassini dress. It had beading on the bodice but it was subtle beneath a chiffon overlay.

Wayne Clark

WAYNE CLARK/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

- Clark channelled Halston for his interpretation of the inaugural gown. "She's a very clean silhouette kind of person. I don't see her in strapless but I thought one shoulder would be great for her."
- The dress is finished in a four-ply, satin-back crepe cut on the bias. The ostrich feathers are part of a removable kimono jacket. "She can't wear fur, or PETA will be all over her." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

David Dixon

DAVID DIXON/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

- Dixon was inspired by Jacqueline Kennedy and Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, the first lady of France. "Oleg Cassini kept it very streamlined and simple for Jackie O. It was always very put-together."
- The outer coat is a heavy silk taffeta in a matte finish — not too shiny. He notes the colour is flattering. "Bruni has worn a lot of that regal purple and so has Michelle Obama." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Joeffer Caoc

JOEFFER CAOC/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

- Caoc tries for an effect that will catch people off guard. "I think unexpected is a good word. As much as I wanted her husband to win, I didn't think he would."
- The overall look: "Really clean. No accessories. A reflection, pretty much, on what I do." The boyfriend jacket is satin: the fuchsia dress is draped jersey. The colour combination is "really current and modern." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Andy Thé-Anh

ANDY THÉ-ANH/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

- "Usually we always think she should wear red or purple. I wanted to try something different."
- The body of the dress is finished in an amber stretch satin charmeuse. The black bandeau top is in a satin taffeta. Flowing silk chiffon in a fiesta colour completes the draping.
- "I see her wearing something very contemporary, very modern but classy." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

United States
Presidential Inauguration

Mary Tomer, a 27-year-old account planner with British advertising agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty, has been tracking the future first lady's style since the Democratic National Convention last summer. With backing from her employer, the Manhattan-based blogger launched a website, Mrs-O.org, that follows the whos and whats of Obama's wardrobe.

For the inaugural ball, Tomer picks the New Jersey-born designer Narciso Rodriguez, whom Obama wore on election night — to mixed reviews.

"I know a lot of people are of the mind that it's going to be a bold, jewel-toned colour," Tomer says, "but my hunch is a winter white." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

DVD picks

Vicky Cristina Barcelona

Director: Woody Allen
Rating: PG

WOODY ALLEN MADE one of his periodic returns to commercial status and also scored some of his highest marks with critics in years on this romance set in Spain. Allen collaborates for the third time with Scarlett Johansson, who stars as an adventurous American on vacation in Spain with a staid pal (Rebecca Hall), the two of them caught up in a love quadrangle with a lusty painter (Javier Bardem) and his volatile ex-wife (Penelope Cruz). Fans will have to do without DVD extras, as Allen prefers to let his movies speak for themselves. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Charlotte Church has a baby
Singer Charlotte Church, left, and rugby star Gavin Henson welcomed their second child, a boy, on Sunday, she announced on her website. USMAGAZINE.COM

Lost voice of indie rock

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

There are plenty of terrible things that can happen to a band on the road, but almost nothing can derail an up-and-coming act like a singer busting her vocal chords. That's what happened to Land of Talk, an infectious rock trio that could soon oust Arcade Fire as the most-talked-about Montreal band.

During the band's September tour, lead singer Elizabeth Powell lost her voice for 15 days. A stint as the female lead in Broken Social Scene through the fall — she officially joined the group last week — and a pre-existing problem with her pipes means the eclectic frontwoman is headed for surgery and will likely be out of commission until at least April.

It's bad news for an act that international audiences are just becoming familiar with. "This is so classic," she says, her voice a little raspy, over the phone from Montreal. "Right when you have momentum something drastic happens. Every time things start going well for us a band member quits or a family member gets sick."

While this setback is serious — Powell's had to opt out of touring with BSS indefinitely — it's not going to stop Land of Talk from all their commitments. The vigorous Metric-meets-Sonic Youth three-piece are making up three Ontario dates this month, in support of their debut Some Are Lakes, and they plan to write and record during their hiatus.

"This is probably the best thing for me and the band in a way," says Powell. "We put out an album in the fall and it was great, but we have a lot of things to work out still."

The distance from their fans might also make the band more in demand when they return to the road. Up until now they've received rave reviews from the likes of Spin Magazine and Rolling Stone, they've toured Europe and North America and they call Saddle Creek, Bright Eyes' label, home.

"A lot of people have been saying nice things about the record, but unless you're out there you don't feel it," she explains. "We stopped touring a few weeks ago and already I feel very detached."

As for the surgery, Powell's pretty confident that everything will be fine, but there is a nagging feeling in the back of her mind that something could go wrong.

"The only thing that worries me is Julie Andrews, who had vocal surgery a few years ago," she says. "She did some holiday announcement and her voice sounded a bit shoddy. I saw this on TV and started freaking out. What if it goes away and I screw it up again? But it's either surgery or taking two years off."

JOSEPH YARMUSH PHOTO

Land of Talk's Elizabeth Powell — who recently joined Broken Scene as lead female vocalist — lost her voice on tour last fall. Now she needs surgery, but first her band plays the Horsehoe on Thursday.

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Faye on Grey's
Faye Dunaway, an Oscar winner for Network, will appear in at least one episode of Grey's Anatomy this February, Entertainment Weekly reports. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Is Jack Bauer yesterday's man?

IntelleVision

IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG TIME: Back when the last episode of season six of 24 aired, subprime mortgages were a good thing, and Barack Obama was the underdog candidate in the Democratic primaries, expected to lose gracefully to Hillary Clinton.

But the way some TV critics have been writing about the return of 24 in the midst of a very different time, you'd think that, sometime in the interim, gravity had been repealed and an extra day had been added to the week.

"Can Jack Bauer make it in the age of Obama?" asked the New York Times last week.

Two days later they told readers that, as ethical dilemmas about torture persist in the first four hours of the new season, the spirit of soon-to-be-former U.S. vice president Dick Cheney "is staying on in spirit on the new season of 24."

"(One critic) went a step further, insisting in a review that the imminent Obama presidency had made 24 'pointless.' "

Tim Goodman of the San Francisco Chronicle went a step further, insisting in a review that the imminent Obama presidency had made 24 "pointless."

"If there's audacity in hope and nationwide belief in the necessity of change, nobody sent the memo to producers of 24," Goodman writes. "This is a series where presidential assassinations were the norm and presidents were corrupt or evil (if they weren't, then they were assassinated). Cynicism about politics and especially the presidency are the currency of 24 — beyond the whole terrorist bogeyman conceit. Hey, they brought back Almeida, why not dig up Dick Nixon, too?"

KELSEY McNEAL/FOX

Please don't quit your day job, Jack. Rick McGinnis thinks you're as relevant as you ever were.

Goodman, only slightly more than his contemporaries, is being unconvincingly naive. What no one can be bothered recalling is that 24 was written and conceived at the end of the Clinton presidency, after Waco, Vince Foster, Bosnia, Kosovo and the "Wag the Dog" missile attacks on Sudan, though it had the bitter luck to premiere just two months after 9/11.

Goodman ignores The Manchurian Candidate and Seven Days In May, and seems to think that cynicism and political paranoia were legislated into existence by John Ashcroft.

At a time when Zimbabwe is printing $50 billion ZWD notes and butchery continues in Sudan despite years of pleas for intervention, 24 is asking us to imagine a rogue African regime covertly attacking the U.S. to prevent military intervention in a genocide; it is, to be sure, the purest of fantasies.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Golden Globes garner lacklustre ratings

TELEVISION The glitz and glamour returned to the Golden Globes, but not all the audience. An estimated 14.6 million people watched Sunday night's ceremony from Hollywood. That's certainly better than the star-free Globes from last year, held during the writer's strike. Only six million watched in 2007. But Nielsen Media Research said it was the smallest audience since the awards moved to network television in 1994.

Two years ago, 20 million people watched the Globes on NBC. Slumdog Millionaire, a movie set in India with no stars, was a big winner this year. So were actresses Kate Winslet and Tina Fey.

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SEVILLE PICTURES

Natar Ungalaaq in a scene from The Necessities of Life.

Oscar hopeful gets U.S. distribution

FILM The Quebec film that is Canada's hope for an Oscar in the category of best foreign film has snagged U.S. distribution rights.

Benoit Pilon's The Necessities of Life (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre) was sold to IFC Films, E1 Films International has announced. The movie follows the journey of an Inuit hunter in the 1950s who's flown to a sanatorium to be treated for tuberculosis, but doesn't understand the language. The film won the audience-choice award and the grand jury prize at last year's Montreal World Film Festival. The short list of nominees for the Academy Award for best foreign film will be announced Jan. 22.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

GlobalStyle
Kenya Hunt
metronews.ca/globalstyle

TO		Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
1/13/09	primetime	265	353	2	TVO	Undersea Exp.	Parks	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Child Genius 2		Secret Life of the Brain		Agenda-Paikin
		211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	NCIS "Broken Bird" (N)		90210 (HDTV) (N)		Kitchen Nightmares		News (N)
		215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
		210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	22 Minutes	Wild Roses (HDTV) (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
		214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (HDTV) (N)		Scrubs	Scrubs	Primetime: What Would		News (N)
		212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	American Idol (HDTV) (Season Premiere) (N)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
		218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	The Biggest Loser (N)				Ruby	The Dish	News (N)
		137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Évolution "Extinction"		*La Veuve Couderc* ★★ (1971, Drame)			Y'a pas d'âge	Dans le secret
		-	-	14	-	Cold Case "Baby Blues"		News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
		213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Ladies Room* ★ (1999, Drama) John Malkovich.				To Serve and Protect		Becker
		-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	NCIS "Broken Bird" (N)		The Mentalist (HDTV) (N)		(10:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
		-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	The Biggest Loser (N)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
		-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Homeland Security USA		Scrubs	Scrubs	Primetime: What Would		News
		219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Cold Case		Law & Order		(10:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
		-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	American Idol (HDTV) (Season Premiere) (N)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
		-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Keeping Up	Nova (DVS)		Secrets of Enlightenment With Deepak			Qi Gong for Beginners	
		297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	90210 (HDTV) (N)		Privileged (HDTV) (N)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
		296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
		298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 (N)
	news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Selling Sex in Heaven		National
		500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
		509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				Made in China, Profit		On the Money		Mad Money
	sports	405	417	22	net	Hockeycentral	UFC: Access	The Ultimate Fighter		Countdown to UFC 93		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
		400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	Strongest Man	Boxing Tomasz Adamek vs. Steve Cunningham.				SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
		411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman		Mantracker "Buck & RJ"		Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman
		417	406	81	SC	Barrett-Jackson Automobile Auction (HDTV) Tuesday action from Scottsdale, Ariz. (Live)								
	family	551	542	25	YTV	Scorpion	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
		554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6teen	6teen	Misadventures	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	Gay Couple
		556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Extreme Celebrity Debt		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	How to Look Good Naked		Maxed Out
		570	580	29	MM	Degrassi: Next	Instant Star	Gone Wild	Gone Wild	Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Degrassi: Next	Instant Star	MuchTopTens
		615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		Manhunters	Manhunters	The Rookies
		700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Serie A	Magnifica Italia	Nati Ieri		Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
		571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Where You At	Popaganda "Sellebrity"		Listed		Celebrity Wrestling		Tommy Lee
		575	583	38	CMT	Cross Canada Countdown		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Wishes
		616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		Mutant X		Testees	Trailer Park	House "Frozen"		House
		620	523	40	BVO	Life Bruce Cockburn		At the Concert Hall		Chantal -- Live at the Pyramids				Law & Order
		601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade		Rich Bride, Poor Bride		End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada
		522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Faking It"		Ultimate Engineering		Ax Men		NCIS "Faking It"		Re-Inventors
		625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gal	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
		600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Pure Design	Style	Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes-Homes
		294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Dumb and Dumber* ★★ (1994, Comedy) Jim Carrey.				Steve Harvey	Seinfeld	Family Guy
		576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Hollywood Shuffle* ★★★ (1987, Comedy), Helen Martin				*Soul Plane* ★★ (2004, Comedy)		
		627	528	50	SPC	Lost "Eggtown"		Lost "The Constant"		The Dresden Files		Destination Truth		Stargate SG-1
		581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	A Double Shot at Love		A Double Shot at Love (N)		MTV Live
		618	524	54	TROP	Planet Soap	Big Screen	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
		603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		The F Word		Good Eats	Good Eats	Iron Chef Am.
		261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Bless-Father	On the Buses	Quantum Leap (Part 2 of 2)		A Deadly Silence (N)		Poltergeist
		621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	Look-A-Like	Off the Leash	The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
		553	546	65	TRE	Ni Hao, Kai-lan	Nght Grdn	Toot & Puddle	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
		115	711	101	TVA	Les Gags	Histoires-filles	La Fièvre de la danse (SC)		La Promesse (HDTV) (N) (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
		126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		Le Club des ex	Le National	Le Téléjournal
		526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy "Imbroglio"		Mediums: Dead People		The West Wing		Encounters	In Dreams	Psychic Inv.
		300	601	301	M1	(7:15) *The Derby Stallion* (2005, Drama), Preston Brant				*P.S. I Love You* ★★ (2007, Romance) Hilary Swank.				*Vantage Point*
		305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *Little Criminals* (1995, Crime Drama)				*Wonder Boys* ★★★ (2000, Comedy-Drama)				*Hello Mary Lou*

critics' corner

Chantal — Live at the Pyramids
Singer Chantal Chamandy used her own resources to get approval to perform in front of Egypt's legendary pyramids. In this special, she performs with the Cairo Symphony Orchestra at the Pyramids of Giza. Songs include "Take a Chance," "Somewhere," "Pray" and more. 9 PM on BVO

Wild Roses
In this new episode, Kate and Lucy are caught rustling a bull from the McGregors after their own breeder bull dies. David's determination to get his hands on Rivercross is ramped up by the news that there may be oil under it in "Sisters and Brothers." 9 PM on CBC

Without a Trace
This week, Jack (Anthony LaPaglia) and the team search for Elena's (Roselyn Sanchez) former partner, an undercover cop who went missing after a sting. During the investigation, Elena is forced to face the repercussions of her own past actions as she races to find her friend in "Once Lost." 10:01 PM on ACH-B CBS

Paltrow ready to pump

Gwyneth Paltrow is set to launch a worldwide chain of gyms with her personal trainer, Tracy Anderson, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The duo is set to build a chain of gyms across Europe, Asia and Australia. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

A-Rod moves on from Madge?

RELATIONSHIPS Looks like A-Rod's forgotten all about Madonna. Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez has allegedly moved on from the pop superstar and is now dating actress Kate Hudson, Page Six reports.

The two were spotted enjoying a three-hour dinner in New York recently, and eyewitnesses say they were getting very cozy. Though the dinner was with a group of friends, the two headed out to a bar together afterward.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Daniel talks secret tattoos

PEOPLE Daniel Craig has a secret intimate tattoo, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Speaking to Jay Leno, he said: "I have a couple of tattoos where you'd see them. There's another where you wouldn't. It's hidden away."

The 40-year-old didn't describe the artwork, although it is believed to start with the letter H.

Craig's other tattoos include a design on his right upper arm and one on the inside of his right calf.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Amy faces lonely vacay

DIVORCE Amy Winehouse is having a bad week. She is said to be distraught over the departure of 21-year-old British actor Josh Bowman who she struck up a romance with — despite being married to jailed Blake Fielder-Civil — while staying at the Le Sport resort on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Meanwhile, the jailed husband of the singer has started divorce proceedings against her, according to people.com.

The website says Fielder-Civil has instructed a lawyer to file papers. "I can confirm that I have been instructed to commence divorce proceedings on the grounds of Amy's adultery," Henri Brandman told People.

The singer's dad, Mitch, is flying out to St. Lucia to console his daughter, after Josh flew home from his vacation on the island with his mother and grandmother, femalefirst.co.uk says.

A guest at the hotel told Britain's The Sun: "Amy was very upset. She was in tears and kept telling Josh she loved him and would see him again soon."

A source added: "Amy has been calling Mitch every day to tell him she is totally besotted. Mitch wants Josh to know he will have their support."

Amy, 25, has credited her meeting Josh and the Caribbean break for changing her outlook on life.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Fergie and Josh on honeymoon

MARRIAGE After leaving their wedding party after 2 a.m. Sunday, Fergie and her new husband — the freshly minted Mr. and Mrs. Josh Duhamel — left that same afternoon for a tropical honeymoon, people.com reports.

The singer, 33, and the actor, 36, had tied the knot at the Church Estates Vineyards in Malibu.

When the newlyweds arrived at Los Angeles International airport around 2 p.m., Fergie showed off multiple plain and diamond studded wedding bands.

"They pulled up in a limo SUV, and Fergie got out first and smiled. She looked so happy. After Josh got out with a carry-on bag, he immediately grabbed Fergie's hand in a very loving and protective way," one eyewitness tells People.

"Fergie said that the wedding was amazing before Josh chimed in and added that the wedding was great."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Fur flies, claws come out for Palin and Fey

PEOPLE Sarah Palin doesn't understand why Tina Fey, a winner again for 30 Rock, was hailed as 2008's entertainer of the year, and Fey doesn't understand why Palin doesn't understand, eonline.com reports.

"I don't understand it, either," Fey told E! after winning at the Golden Globes on Sunday night. "There are a lot of things that she and I don't understand."

E! tried to get Fey to comment on Palin's criticism of the Bristol Palin-inspired Saturday Night Live crack about teenage marriage, but Fey wouldn't further provoke Palin.

"No reaction," Fey told the entertainment show.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Comeback too soon, Brit's ex-manager says

CAREER Britney Spears' former manager is speaking out about her current comeback. Johnny Wright — who parted ways with the singer in 2003 and sued her in 2007 for money he was owed — thinks that Britney's return to showbiz is too soon. "A comeback is not what I wish for Britney," Wright told OK! Magazine. "All her essential relationships have been torn apart. She's been divorced twice, she doesn't have custody of her kids, she's being pushed back into being a money machine."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

J.Lo and Marc jumping on Obama bandwagon?

POLITICS Jennifer Lopez and hubby Marc Anthony are showing their support for Barack Obama — but only after he was elected.

Page Six says Anthony agreed to sing and Lopez said she would "speak" at the Latino Inaugural Ball in Washington on Jan. 18. But some Democrats are furious that the wealthy couple didn't show early support.

One player called them "vile opportunists for worming themselves into anything Obama-related even though they had nothing to do with his win."

The source noted Anthony refused to perform during a crucial get-out-the-Latino-vote event and Lopez refused to endorse Obama unless he called her himself, which he didn't. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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PETER TRAVERS, Rolling Stone

"ENORMOUSLY ENTERTAINING."
JEFFREY LYONS, NBC/LYONS & BAILES REEL TALK

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CLAUDIA PUIG, USA TODAY

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Thursday 70% Flurries -16° / -21°

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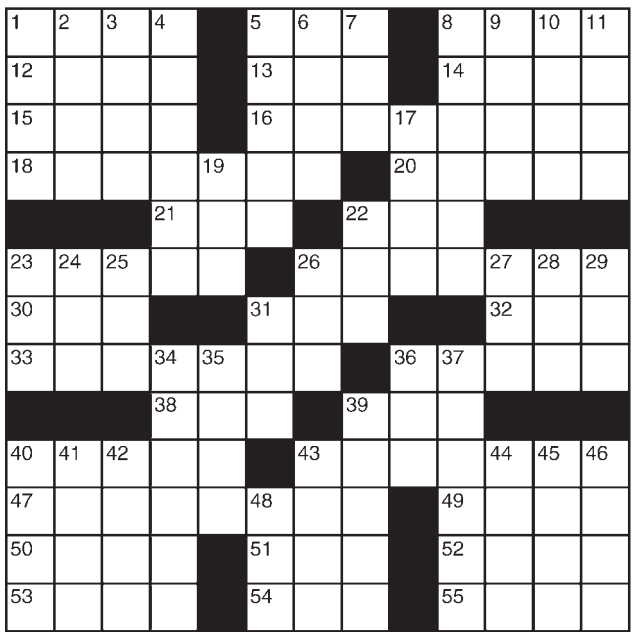

Crossword across

1 Help a lawbreaker
5 James Bond, e.g.
8 Pitch
12 Note to self
13 UN work agcy.
14 Top-rated
15 Hotel employee
16 Lefty
18 Do better at the box office
20 Thready streaks
21 Chat room chuckling
22 Suitable
23 Westminster, for one
26 Michigan city
30 Tavern
31 Carton
32 Wool provider
33 Louisiana tribe
36 Cell, perhaps
38 Glutton
39 Festive
40 Light bulb gas
43 Carpentry tool
47 Saskatchewan city
49 Hindu noble
50 Rim
51 Wapiti
52 Somewhere out there
53 Night light?
54 Plaything
55 Alluring

Crossword down

1 Bullets, arrows, etc.
2 Suitor
3 Discharge
4 Walk unsteadily
5 Twine fibre
6 Turn the soil
7 Addressee
8 Papeete's island
9 "My bad"
10 Break suddenly
11 Stitches
17 Tiny branch
19 Trigger's rider
22 — modem
23 "Lost" network
24 Scrooge's cry
25 Family guy?
26 Spread seeds
27 Ultra-modernist (Pref.)
28 Grain bristle
29 Teensy
31 Satchel
34 Selected
35 Color quality
36 Skillet
37 Problems that multiply
39 Maladroit
40 Prayer end
41 Took the train
42 Spirited and aggressive
43 Head light?
44 Secure
45 Trojan War hero
46 Cautious
48 Lustrous black

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	6						2	
	3	2		9		4	5	
4			5		1			8
		8	1		2	3		
		1	4		8	5		
7			9		3			5
	1	3		6		7	9	
	5						6	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

R	O	A	D	■	M	A	T	■	S	E	L	F		
Y	A	L	E	■	A	G	A	■	I	L	I	E		
E	T	A	L	■	D	E	M	A	N	D	E	D		
S	H	R	E	W	D	■	E	M	B	O	S	S		
■	■	■	T	R	E	Y	■	P	A	R	■	■		
D	E	M	E	A	N	O	R	■	D	A	N	A		
O	V	A	■	P	E	K	O	E	■	D	O	N		
W	A	L	K	■	D	E	M	I	J	O	H	N		
■	■	D	I	P	■	D	A	R	E	■	■	■		
A	N	E	M	I	A	■	N	E	T	T	L	E		
D	E	M	O	C	R	A	T	■	S	I	A	M		
E	V	E	N	■	I	I	I	■	A	N	T	I		
N	E	R	O	■	A	R	C	■	M	E	E	T		

6	9	2	8	5	4	3	1	7
5	7	8	3	1	9	6	2	4
3	1	4	7	6	2	5	9	8
2	4	9	6	8	7	1	5	3
7	3	1	4	9	5	8	6	2
8	6	5	2	3	1	4	7	9
1	8	7	5	2	3	9	4	6
9	2	3	1	4	6	7	8	5
4	5	6	9	7	8	2	3	1

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Chicken Breasts with Tarragon

INGREDIENTS:
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, about 6 oz (170 g) each
2 tbsp (25 ml) plain flour
Salt and black pepper
1 1/2 tbsp (20 ml) unsalted butter
1 1/2 tbsp (20 ml) sunflower oil
2 shallots
4 sprigs of fresh tarragon
3/4 cup (175 ml) dry white wine
1 1/3 cups (325 ml) chicken stock
4 tbsp (60 ml) whipping cream

METHOD:
1. Preheat oven to low. Trim excess fat from breasts and pat dry with paper towel. Dust with flour and season lightly.
2. Heat butter and 1 tbsp (15 ml) oil in frying pan over moderate heat and fry breasts for about 6 minutes per side.
3. Peel and chop shallots. Rinse and dry tarragon, snip off ends and reserve as garnish; strip leaves from remaining stems, chop and set aside.
4. Transfer chicken to oven to keep warm. Add shallots to pan with remaining oil and fry, stirring, for 1 minute. Add wine and half the chopped tarragon. Boil until wine has reduced by half. Add chicken stock and reduce by half again.
5. Stir in whipping cream and remaining chopped tarragon, return chicken to pan, and warm through for 1 minute per side. Serve garnished with tarragon tips.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A complimentary person is hard to figure out. Work quickly to get a job done properly. Find the humour when a man apologizes.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A straight-talking person has the power of endurance. Problems lead you to discover that someone loves you. An unfaithful guy does a nasty job.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
An insomniac achieves something special. Watch your reaction to a strong temptation. A reality lesson is learned by a reluctant man.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Give yourself permission to find wealth. A lonely person will go away to a better place. Someone is bowing to your will to succeed.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A helpful foreigner aids your plans. Reduce your anxiety with a change of direction. Don't be afraid to have second thoughts.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Grumpiness will change a plan. An insignificant effort will pay off. Your reputation gets more attention.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A funny woman will lift your spirits. Learn the true meaning of courage. A lack of common sense causes jagged nerves.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A message prevents a challenge. Avoid getting stuck in your memories. Someone who has tacky taste can help you.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A stimulating talk will break new ground. Inventive help comes from somebody who is stressed. You'll be able to move again.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
You can refuse a melodramatic person's help. A fresh reaction will inflame gossipers. An anxious guy wants you to give a pep talk.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
You can refuse a melodramatic person's help. A fresh reaction will inflame gossipers. An anxious guy wants you to give a pep talk.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Some people are doubtful about your plans. You must face an aversion if you want to conquer it. An early-bird will be punished.

This day in history

JAN. 13, 1842: Dr. William Brydon, a surgeon in the British Army during the First Anglo-Afghan War, becomes famous for being the sole survivor of an army of 16,500 when he reaches the safety of a garrison in Jalalabad.
JAN. 13, 1938: The Church of England accepts the theory of evolution.
JAN. 13, 1942: Henry Ford patents a plastic automobile, which is 30 per cent lighter than a regular car.
JAN. 13, 1922: Japan apologizes for forcing Korean women into sexual slavery during World War II.

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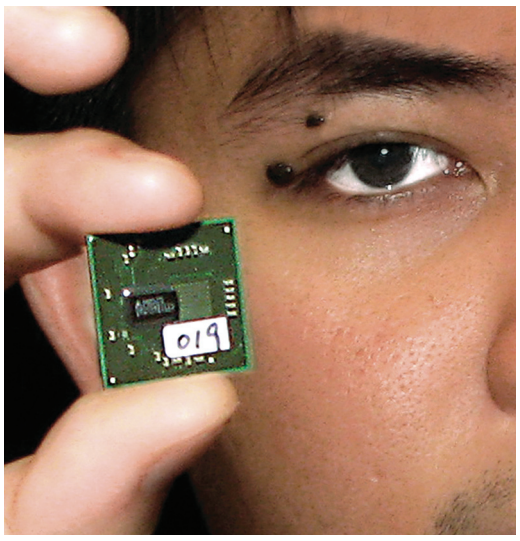

SENECA CHIP DESIGNER BRINGS PRODUCTS TO LIFE

The next time you admire the eye-popping graphics of your game console, computer or cell phone, think of Yaosan Yeo.

This 24-year-old designs the tiny silicon wafers, commonly referred to as chips that help breathe colourful life into these and many other electronics devices.

It's all part of his job as an analog designer for AMD, one of the largest graphic chip makers in the world.

Companies like AMD are looking for technically skilled employees who can create the next generation of high performance chip and Seneca is one of the few colleges in Canada offering this type of training.

"Chip design remains something of an art," says Mario Boetto, Chair, School of Electronics and Computer Engineering Technology. "It's a demanding task that makes these designers rare, highly regarded and well paid."

Yaosan learned the intricacies of chip design as a student in Seneca's Applied Electronics Design program, a one-year Ontario College Graduate Certificate that trains students in all aspects of electronics design.

This program is intended for both new graduates of courses in electronics technology and those with industry experience in engineering or technology.

To learn more about the Applied Electronics Design program, visit www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/AED.html

YOUNG LEGAL EAGLE SOARS HIGH WORKING FOR PRESTIGIOUS FIRM

You don't have to be a lawyer to have a career in law. Just ask Sarah Millard. The 26-year-old Seneca graduate is a law clerk for Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP – a North American firm specializing in business law.

Sarah started looking at college programs that offered careers in law, and that's when she came across Seneca's Law Clerk program.

Because she already had a university degree, she enrolled in the College's accelerated offering, and within one-year she earned her diploma and received a full-time job offer from Osler.

Sarah's working in the corporate division of the firm as a securities law clerk where she manages a number of different public disclosure filings and some securities registration work.

Students studying in Seneca's Law Clerk program are trained to assist lawyers in private law offices and in the legal departments of government and industry.

Areas of concentration include real estate, corporate and commercial law and litigation.

The earning potential for experienced clerks can be as high as six figures depending on the area of law they specialize in.

To learn more about the Law Clerk program, visit www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/LCKA.html

SENECA COURSE INSPIRES NEW JEWELRY BUSINESS

A Seneca course that teaches students how to become effective sellers has inspired one student to turn his class project into a full-time business.

Thang Do, a student in the International Business program, has launched Accessories by the Sea, an online store that sells handmade jewelry directly from Vietnam.

"All the jewelry is made from natural sea shells from the ocean," says Thang, who was born in Vietnam. "We sell necklaces, bracelets, earrings — all crafted to perfection."

Thang knew he stumbled on to a gem of an idea during a presentation he made in his International Effective Selling class.

Before he could even finish speaking, the female students in his class had their hands up asking where they could buy his jewelry.

At the encouragement of his Professor Maurice Platero, and with the permission of the College, Thang set up a table at Newnham Campus and started selling his jewelry.

Within four days, he was completely sold out.

"This is a perfect example of a student taking what they've learned in class and applying it," says Maurice. "I tell my students, having a good idea is just one part of the equation. You need to be able to sell that idea or product as well, and that's what we teach our students to do through the Effective Selling course."

To learn more about the International Business program, visit www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/IBU.html

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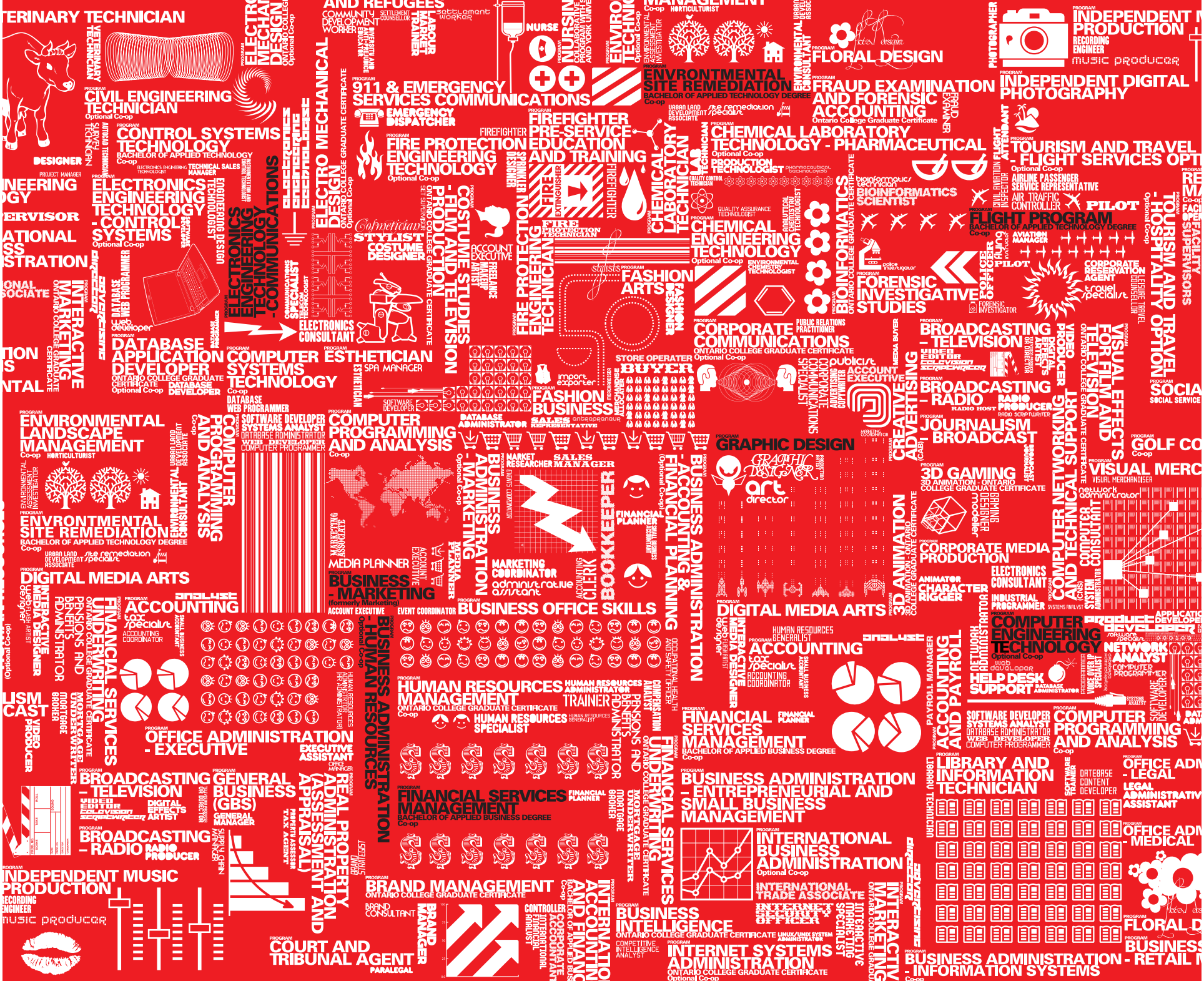

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